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THE KARENS

OF THE

GOLDEN CHERSONESE.

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By

LIEUT-COLONEL A. R. McMAHON, F.R.G.S.,

Madras Staff Corps; Deputy Commissioner, British Burma.

LONDON:

HAR[illegible]ALL MALL,

The Prince of Wales.

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PREFACE.

When in charge of the frontier district of Toungoo, in British Burma, a few years ago, I was called on to furnish information regarding the origin, history, traditions, religion, language, habits, and customs of the various peoples having their *habitat* therein, in view to incorporation in a Gazetteer.

Ethnologically speaking, Toungoo is perhaps the most important district in this region, as in it are found representatives of most of the various tribes and clans known under the generic name of Karen, whose curious traditions, especially those which refer to biblical events, as well as the marvellous success which has attended the efforts of Christian missionaries among them, have enlisted much interest and sympathy in their behalf. The late Dr. Mason and other missionaries who had long devoted themselves to the people, and through whose writings the Karens have become known to the outer world, were fortunately in Toungoo at the time, and owing to their generous assistance I was placed in possession of materials far in excess of the Government requirements.

The subject was in itself so interesting, however,

that I pursued my inquiries further, and the more I learnt the more fascinating it became, especially when I was able, by intimate communication with the people in my tours through the district, sometimes in jungles where a white man had never been seen before, to confirm by personal experience much of the information I had acquired from others or from books, and also to collect much matter which had not been noticed by former observers.

Much has already been written about the Karens, but in somewhat a desultory fashion, and not easily accessible to the general reader. By a diligent search in American publications, secular and religious, most excellent articles are to be found here and there scattered through magazines, and books published in England and India; papers by Dr. Mason, Mr. O'Riley, Mr. Logan, and others are published.

But no general account of the people noticing the different heads, indicated in the Government circular, has ever been written. It therefore struck me that I might endeavour to supply this desideratum when the pressure of official work allowed me. But this was not to be while in Burma, and it was only when I obtained leave to visit England, that I was able to carry out this idea.

Even then, however, I did not see my way towards publication, as I was aware that the best efforts in this direction would only appeal to the sympathies of a limited circle of readers.

Much more interest having lately been taken in Burma and adjoining countries, my friends in England with whom I left the MS., thought this was an opportune time for publishing them.

With a hope that this may be the case, and at the same time conscious of many imperfections in the work, it is with much diffidence I submit it to the judgment of the public, whose indulgence I would crave for this attempt to give a general account of a most interesting people.

To several friends my hearty acknowledgments are due for their kindly assistance. To none more so than to the lamented Rev. Dr. Mason, who not only favoured me with valuable memoranda on many subjects, but generously allowed me to avail myself of his MS., and published papers.

To other Missionaries my thanks are also due for aid in prosecuting my researches.

I am further not a little indebted for much valuable information, especially about Karennee, from a perusal of Mr. O'Riley's interesting journals.

A. R. McMAHON.

Prome, 4th October, 1875.

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THE KARENS

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GOLDEN CHERSONESE.

CHAPTER I.

Introductory.

From that comparatively unexplored, although prominent, region on the confines of Tibet, lying between Assam and China, a number of noble rivers rush to the east and to the south, the ethnological influence of which, in reference to the tonic region, or that portion of the world's surface which is solely occupied by peoples distinguished by monosyllabic speech, is so paramount, as to claim more than ordinary attention, when considering the probable directions of migration and connection of the ultra-Indian and Chinese races. In this splendid river system, of which the Hoangho and the Irrawaddy form the eastern and western flanks respectively, we have included the Salwen, Mekong, and Yang-tse-kiang, as well as the secondary basins of the Menam, Sonka, and Hong-Kiang.

The great Himalayan chain which forms the southern boundary of its land of origin, is inter-

cepted on the south-esst confines of Tibet by a transverse mountain system, originating with the Yunling and allied ranges, and also forming the ultra-Indian peninsulas, by which the Hoangho is forced far north, and ultimately finds its way into the Gulf of Pecheli.

The same cause operates in driving the Yang-tse-Kiang in a contrary direction as far as the borders of Yunan, where becoming involved in longitudinal ranges to the east of the Indo-Chinese river system, it is abruptly turned, and, flowing parallel to the Hoangho, effects an exit into the Yellow Sea.

We now come to the rivers comprising the western division of this fluviatile region, namely, the Irrawaddy, Salwen, and Mekong.

The first two debouching into the Bay of Bengal, and the third into the China Sea, are hemmed in for the most part by subordinate ranges of the Himalaya, which take an independent turn to the south, and after vainly striving, as it were, to emulate in colossal grandeur, the high places of the earth they have left behind, sink into insignificance in the promontory of the Malay peninsula, and are finally lost in the archipelago to the south.

These rivers and their valleys were evidently the primeval highways by which the peoples of Farther India came down from the dreary and inhospitable margin of the great central plateau to their present dwelling-places. And no doubt there was a time when there were no other routes available, even in the more favourably circumstanced countries of India and China. In this sparsely populated region, river

and streams for the most part regulate the distribution of its human inhabitants, for it is on their banks the great bulk of the population is to be found. This is, and will necessarily for a long time be the case, more particularly in those portions of the country intersected by a labyrinth of tidal creeks, such as characterises the delta of the Irrawaddy.

The same phenomenon is observable, although not to the same extent, in the interior of the country, but the natural obstacles to communication therein have been partially overcome by the energy of peoples who have attained the status of separate nations, but who possibly for ages were cut up into petty tribes on the banks of rivers or their affluents.

The whole of the region comprised within this river system is well adapted for the habitation of man, as the rich and fertile alluvial plains are capable of sustaining a large population, and the natural means of internal communication by water abundant; while the valleys, although separated from each other by high mountains, are united by the highway of the sea.

The ethnology of the region from which these rivers take their rise is still very obscure, but the little data we have is sufficient to warrant us in coming to the conclusion that it will prove of extraordinary interest in determining the many ethnological questions in reference to the peoples of Farther India, which are now necessarily conjectural. For in a country almost inaccessible from lofty mountains and other physical causes, many of the inhabited districts must still be secluded, and the numerous petty tribes to be found therein, retaining their

original languages and customs, probably afford the missing links for determining whether the theories in regard to the affinities of language and similarity of manners between the people influenced by these rivers and the great table lands to the north are well founded. The relative positions of the ultra-Indian races, as well as their languages, as far as we know at present, give ample grounds for connecting them, with what are supposed to have been their ancient location and subsequent movements.

Geographically speaking, it is also almost a *terra incognita* even in regard to the sources of those fine rivers, which for a long time, it was hoped, would prove the natural outlets of commerce from the greater part of Western China. The subject was, it is true, exhaustively handled by recent writers,* who prove that much of the ancient geography that we pinned our faith upon is no longer to be relied on. No new light, however, has been thrown on the question, and little to the credit of our character for enterprise, no attempt appears to have been made to solve this interesting problem by actual exploration.

It has been proved that the Salwen and the Mekong are impracticable, on account of the many rocks and rapids encountered in their course. The Irrawaddy, however, is navigable by ordinary river steamers for at least one thousand miles from the sea. The Burmese, much to their honour, were the first to prove this by the actual experiment of run-

* See Dr. Anderson's "Report on the Expedition to Western Yeman." Sir Arthur Phayre and Colonel Yule in "Ocean Highways" for October and November, 1872.

ning a good-sized steamer as far as Bhanio, or to the point where the old caravan route from Yunan struck the Irrawaddy—a route which, it is hoped, will ere long be revived, to result in such a measure of wealth and prosperity to the region it will affect, as to enable it to claim, with some show of truth, its ancient name of the Golden Chersonese.

The territory influenced by these rivers, extending from the Bay of Bengal to the Chinese Sea, and as far south as the Straits of Malacca, is inhabited by a branch of the great Mongolian family, many of whose tribes, although differing somewhat in their mental and physical characteristics, in the general affinities of their languages, as well as in their manners and customs, have yet many striking features in common, and possess a homogeneity sufficiently marked to enable us to include them in one family, when speaking of the nations of the earth. This family, divided into numerous peoples and languages, none of which appear indigenous, is styled Indo-Chinese by ethnologists, and the part of the globe they occupy, for want of a better name, is called Farther India.

On the extreme west of this territory, and hugging the Bay of Bengal, is a strip of country extending from the 10th degree of north latitude as far as Chittagong, comparatively narrow up both ends, but of greater bulk in the centre, having an area of nearly ninety-four thousand square miles, and with a population of about two millions and a-half.

Of the three divisions of which it is comprised, the main or central one consists of the fertile region of Pegu, the ancient kingdom of the Mons or Talaings, which stretches inland for a distance of

nearly three hundred miles, and includes the important valley of the Irrawaddy and a portion of the Salwen.

Arakan, or the northern division, which was originally a powerful kingdom till conquered by the Burmese, is a comparatively narrow tract, extending from the borders of Chittagong to Cape Negrais, between the sea and a high mountain chain, while the southern division of Tenasserim is a somewhat similar piece of coast territory, stretching from the Salwen river to the Siamese boundary on the south, comprising also the islands known as the Mergui Archipelago.

After the first Burmese war, in 1825, Arakan and Tenasserim were forfeited to the English, Pegu being spared, as it was not then thought advisable to deprive the King of Burmah of the whole of his seaboard. But, after the second war in 1852—53, such forbearance was no longer considered necessary, Pegu was accordingly annexed, and the kingdom of Burmah was thus cut off from maritime intercourse, save through British territory, China, or Siam. The three divisions we refer to were formerly under separate administrations, but, in 1862, were constituted into one province, and styled British Burmah, in contradistinction to Burmah proper, whose seaboard it formerly was, while the name of the latter was somewhat arbitrarily changed, in official quarters, into Ava, in consequence of the confusion that is said to have arisen from the indiscriminate use of the term Burmah.

It is with reference to this Burmah and its adjacent territory, in connection with one of the most

interesting races in the world, that we would fain hope to enlist the attention of our readers. But it is not to the Ava, or the Burmah of yesterday, we would claim this privilege, but to its far more interesting equivalents of *Aurea, Regio, Chryse, Survarna-Bhumi, Aurea, Chersonesus* and *Ophir*, by all of which synonyms this region was known to the ancients.

And what food for reflection does not the very name of Ophir suggest! carrying us back, as it were, in imagination some three thousand years, when the great and wise King Solomon, in organizing his plans for the building of the temple which was to be the glory of his reign, entered into a treaty of commerce and friendship with Hiram, King of Tyre, by which the latter was to supply gold of Ophir, cedar-wood from Lebanon, purple from the Tyrean looms and Zidonian workmen, in exchange for corn and oil from the territories of King Solomon.

And when we call to remembrance the results of this famous alliance with the Phœnicians, who were the great maritime and commercial people of the ancient world, we are reminded that it marks an eventful era in the history of the Jews as a commercial people, showing when they began to take an interest in personal intercourse with foreign countries, which hitherto they had hardly known by name.

For it was then that the ports of Elath and Ezirengeber, in the Red Sea, were filled with their ships, and that Phœnician pilots and such as were skilled in navigation were commanded by Solomon to go with his own stewards "to the land that was

of old called Ophir, but now the Aurea Chersonesus, which belongs to India, to fetch him gold."*

With little effort, then, can we picture to ourselves the splendid navies of Solomon and Hiram, built of the fir trees of Senir, with their oars of the oak of Bashan, masts of the cedar of Lebanon, embroidered sails, and ivory benches brought out of the isles of Chittim, manned by the mariners of Zidon and Arphad, piloted by the wise men of Tyre, and well found, in every respect, laying at anchor in the different emporia of the Golden Chersonese, and tempting the inhabitants with embroidered fine linen from Egypt, blue and purple from the isles of Elishu, emerald, corals, and agate from Syria, oil and palm from Judah; rich wares, wine of Helbon, and white wool from Damascus; iron, cassia, and calamus from Dan and Javan: for Ezekiel, speaking of the Tyre that was "of perfect beauty," and "glorious in the midst of the seas," says, "thy wares went forth out of the seas, thou filledst many peoples; thou didst enrich the kings of the earth, with the multitude of thy riches and thy merchandise."†

We can imagine with what zeal and diligence the wise and astute stewards and servants of Solomon wandered over this beautiful country, and while delighting in its magnificent and varied scenery, enquired at the same time into its resources, to enable them to secure the more readily their freights of gold, almug trees, and precious stones. And with what pleasure they exchanged their beautiful wares for the silver and ivory they needed, not forgetting

* Whiston's "Josephus."

† Ezekiel, xxvii, 33.

to take with them zoological specimens, in the shape of apes and peacocks, which, from their novelty, would be appreciated in their own country.

We can also picture to ourselves the anxiety which these ships, absent perhaps for nearly three years at a time, occasioned, and the delight with which their return, laden with the rich treasures of the East, was welcomed.

A great diversity of opinion, we are aware, exists as to the identity of Ophir.

It is placed in Peru by numerous authorities, to whom the venerable Purchas gave the appellation of "owls." Some place it in the East, others on the West Coast of Africa, while Arabia, Ceylon, and Persia, have their adherents in reference to the solution of this problem.* But the balance of evidence is in favour of the Aurea Chersonesus of Ptolemy. "A great deal has been written," observes Max Muller, "to find out where this Ophir was; but there can be no doubt that this was in India. The names for apes, peacocks, ivory, and algum trees are foreign words in Hebrew, as much as gutta-percha or tobacco is in English. If, therefore, we can find a language in which names which are foreign in Hebrew are indigenous, we may be certain that the country in which that language was spoken must have been Ophir." Mr. Buckton, on the other hand, in reference to algum trees and peacocks, says, "it has not been proved that the words in Hebrew so translated are Sanscrit, and the same may be said of the other articles in that country." †

* "Notes and Queries," 3rd series, viii, 25.

† "Notes and Queries," 3rd series, viii, 26.

In the Golden Chersonese, apes or monkeys and peacocks are common, silver is plentiful on its borders, and although gold is not found so abundantly as probably was the case in ancient times, it is met with and worked in small quantities in many parts of the country.

The principal portion of the gold in use with the people now is imported from China in the shape of gold leaf, which has from times immemorial been extensively used in ornamenting their religious buildings, as well as the palaces, carriages, boats, trappings, and other paraphernalia belonging to the Royal family, or persons of distinction.

The term golden is also universally used when referring either to the personal or mental attributes of Royalty, and is even tacked on to the names of the humblest persons in the community. It was no wonder then that even comparatively modern travellers seem to have been profoundly impressed with the appropriateness of the term Aurea Regio. Nature again has endowed the country with vast stores of mineral wealth, although it is true that much of this lies dormant.

Rubies, sapphires, and gems of great value, are found in great quantities, and it is therefore not improbable that the precious stones intended for the Temple were obtained in this region.

In regard to algum or almug trees, we acknowledge there is a difficulty, owing to the learned not being agreed as to what wood is referred to. Some conjecturing it to be the sandal wood of the East, others ebony, pine, coral, or shittim.

There are several species of acacia, to which the

shittim of scripture is allied—Burmah and two or three of the genus Erythrina or coral tree.* Ebony is also plentiful, and pine is found on the hills, but teak is the great tree of commerce, and as "it is hard, tough, smooth, and very beautiful," it is identical, in these respects, with the precious wood so extensively used in the temple.

Josephus† tells us that about the time the Queen of Sheba visited Solomon, "there were brought to the king from the Aurea Chersonesus, a country so called, precious stones and pine trees, and these trees he made use of for supporting the temple and the palace, as also for the materials of musical instruments, the harps and the psalteries, that the Levites might make use of them in their hymns to God. The wood that was brought to him at the time was larger and finer than any that had been brought before; but let no one imagine that these pine trees were like those which are now so named, and which take their denomination from the merchants who so call them, that they may procure them to be admired by those that purchase them; for those we speak of were to the sight like the wood of the fig tree, but were whiter and more shining. Now we have said this much that no one may be ignorant of the difference between these sorts of wood, nor unacquainted with the nature of the genuine pine tree; and we thought it both a seasonable and humane thing when we mentioned it,

* A small species of Erythrina, with reddish flowers, is famous in Buddhist mythology as the tree around which the Devas dance till they are intoxicated in Sudra's heaven.—Mason's "Burmah," p. 531.

† Whiston's "Josephus," 227.

and the uses the king made of it, to explain the difference so far as we have done."

Purchas, who gave early attention to the navigation of the Phœnicians and the voyage of King Solomon's servant to Ophir, says, "The region of Ophir we take to be from Ganges to Menam, and most probably the large kingdom of Pegu."*

In his pilgrimage (page 756) he goes on to say that Dr. Dee, that famous mathematician, hath written a very large discourse of that argument, which I have seen with Dr. Hakluyt, much illustrating what the Ancients have written of these seas and coasts, and concluded that Havila is the kingdom of Ava, subject to Pegu, and Ophir is Chryse or Aurea, before mentioned."†

Sir Arthur Phayre tells that by the name Thoocwa-na-bhoomee (Survarna Bhumi)‡ is meant the country inhabited by the Mon or Talaing race, whose chief city was on the site of the present Thatung (Thatone), when the Buddhist missionaries Oo-tara and Thau-na, deputed by Dham-ma Asoka visited it in the year 308 B.C. "That gold was anciently found in that vicinity," he adds, "is testified by the Burmese name of Showe-gyren,

* Caspar Varrerius, in his "Lib. de Ophira," is of the same opinion. He says, "Ophir esse Pegusiæ regnum, et regiones vicines in India Orientali, prætor alios probarunt."—"Notes and Queries," 2nd series, viii, 26.

† "Notes and Queries," 3rd series, viii, 26.

‡ Dr. Mason points out that *Suvarna* is nearly identical with Sopheir, the Greek name of Ophir, if we drop the last syllable, and this under certain circumstances can, he says, be done—Sophir was also the ancient Egyptian name for India. "Burmah," p. 20. "Penny Cyclopædia," vol. vi, 447.

literally 'gold washing,' now borne by a town on the Sittang, and gold is still found there, though probably in diminished quantity to what it was anciently. This no doubt was the origin of the name 'Aurea Regio' of Ptolemy." *

There are reasonable grounds for believing that a comparatively advanced maritime civilisation existed on the seaboard of this region from the most ancient times, and that a few tribes favourably placed became considerable nations. These maritime races were exposed at intervals to the irruption of inland peoples, impelled by the pressure of others behind them from the bleak and arid regions of the north. The ultra-Indian tribes, it would appear, have ever been distinguished for a chronic proneness to mutual hostilities, and the comparatively civilised peoples on the seaboard have frequently succumbed to stronger and more warlike races.

The Mons, or Talaings, have been almost obliterated by the Burmese. The Burmese, in turn, have been enveloped and pressed forward by the Shans or Tais, which have also influenced the whole of the Menam basin, and the upper basin of the Mekong, just as the former have influenced the lower valley of the Irrawaddy. The ancient tribes, as Mr. Logan says, were doubtless equally aggressive, and annexation and absorption must always have been in progress.† It is therefore beyond the bounds of probability that the archaic ethnic affinities of the region which played such an important part in con-

* "Trans. Eth. Soc., Lond.," v, 36.

† See Mr. Logan in "J. Ind. Arch.," vol. iii, p. 1, 157.

nection with the voyages of the Phœnicians, and King Solomon's servants, can now be traced.

Although, then, in this crude dissertation, we do not presume to give more than the tangible points illustrating the vexed question of the identity of Ophir,—the elucidation of which interesting subject requires far more learning than we possess—even were such a course advisable in this narrative; still, a short digression seemed called for to enable us to show that we have reasonable grounds for assuming the title of "Golden Chersonese" for the country in which our scenes are laid.

The traveller who has left behind him the sad-coloured and surf-bound coast of Coromandel, with its monotonous rows of palms, or the equally uninteresting sunderbunds of the Ganges, with their low lying, slimy banks, covered with dank and miasma-breeding jungle—fit abode for the alligator and the tiger, but deadly to human life—cannot fail to be struck with the rich, varied, and glorious scenery of the Golden Chersonese.

Whether his approach be through the tawny-coloured waves, which mark where a great river, thickly charged with alluvial deposit, mingles with the ocean, or whether it be through the clear blue sea that washes its rock-bound coast, he is sure to be charmed.

Here a cluster of islets, covered to the water's edge with dense foliage of varied hue, with beautiful headlands and tiny inlets, the representatives in miniature of the bold bluffs and deeply indented bays of the mainland, claim his attention.

There, grotesque and weather-beaten crags, crop

out of the rich verdure, marking the places where the natives of the Archipelago—the "Sea Karens," or "Selungs," find lucrative employment in collecting the edible birds' nests, the "Celestial" so dearly loves.

Ranges of lofty mountains, which claim relationship with the Great Himalaya, at times looming in the distance, and anon throwing out feelers into the sea, form a background of surpassing grandeur; while the nearer inspection which a sail up its rivers affords, reveals new beauties—approaching the sublime—when contrasted with what he last saw, and worthy of comparison with the most favoured places in the world.

Language is certainly a feeble agent in depicting the scenes of Nature's grandeur, which he is now privileged to witness. Hills, with rounded or rugged contour, whose summits, as well as every other vantage ground, are crowned with pyramidal pagodas, and quaint flagstaffs, whose silvery bells tinkle in every breeze, diversified by sequestered, but picturesque little nooks, planted with jack, mango, tamarind, and other fruit trees, from which the triple-roofed monasteries of Buddhist monks peep forth, are conspicuous objects in the foreground.

Plains, with vivid green, yellow or sombre patches, shining brilliantly in the sun's rays, or temporarily obscured by passing clouds, with curious masses of limestone, here and there heaved up and scattered over them in the wildest disorder, form pleasing objects in mid-distance. Horizons, now bounded by congeries of hills, that heap up behind each other till lost in the misty distance, or again

contrasted by ranges with the most fantastic outline, which

> "Lift to the clouds their craggy heads on high,
> Crowned with tiaras fashioned in the sky."

Deep rugged ravines and stupendous cliffs, often shooting up sheer two thousand feet; streams that course down the mountain sides, forming brawling cascades, or trending through undulating valleys, flash like silver in the sunlight; great rivers, on which the ships of all nations securely float; combining, one and all, many of the softer beauties of wood and water, with all the stern sublimity of mountain scenery, give to the landscape a character inconceivably fascinating, and taking the beholders for the nonce, far away from the tropics, realize for a moment the scenes of more temperate climes, justly famed for their exquisite beauty.

That this description applies to the whole of the country it is far from our intention to imply. Indeed, exception, at first sight, may, we allow, be taken, in this respect, to the flourishing but not strikingly picturesque port of Rangoon, but subsequent acquaintance proves that its environs yield not in homelike, tranquil beauty, to the most favoured localities. The intricate creeks of the delta of the Irrawaddy, fringed with huge elephant grass, or interminable mangrove jungle, relieved though it be, at intervals, by rich cultivation, that returns eighty-fold, ninety-fold, and even one-hundred fold to the "dogged toiler," we must also allow, soon weary with their monotony; but, on ascending some distance up the noble river, the landscapes become more varied, and here and there culminate into a wild

sublimity and grandeur which vie with the magnificent scenery on the coast.

Climate.—The unhealthiness of Burma some years ago was proverbial, and not unjustly so, arguing by the results of our occupation. Its climate, especially that of its seaboard, was then the theme of many writers on hygiene, who generally condemned it. Subsequent experience, however, caused them to moderate their views considerably, and the balance of evidence, as collected from the different health reports of the province, proves that the old impressions regarding the deadly nature of its climate are without foundation ; for the actual death-rate among Europeans contrasts favourably with more temperate climes. Still, of those who suffer from ill-health, a greater percentage apparently are obliged to have recourse to more bracing climates than is the case in less healthy portions of India. The climate is certainly depressing to invalids ; and to ensure permanent recovery, in many cases a trip to the Nilgherries, or other hill stations in India, or perhaps to England, becomes imperative. Much expense is entailed thereby on many hard worked officers of the State, merchants and others, and a vast outlay is incurred by Government on account of its invalid soldiers and families, which might be spared if we had hill sanitaria in Burma.

It seems, therefore, worthy of the consideration of Government, whether one or more of the hill sites within the province might not be made available for the accommodation of its soldiers, and for the growing wants of many of its subjects, who are now compelled to leave it when change of air is necessary.

The average temperature is greatly affected by the sea breeze; and in the hot weather some of the inland stations are some 14 or 15 degrees hotter than those on the coast. Locality naturally affects the temperature; and as Dr. Mason remarks, "the Flora reads a lesson as to the climate of the country that cannot be mistaken, and, in accordance with it, where pines and rhododendrons are found, hoar frost is seen in January." In the plains tropical luxuriance of verdure is seen in all its variety; while on the hills, the Alpine plants and grasses, many of which are common in Europe, testify to their temperate climate.

Animal Kingdom.—The usual domestic animals found in India are common. The buffaloes, especially those on the sea coast, are splendid animals, while the other horned cattle, although small, are strong, compact, and sturdy.

Of the wild animals, the following are the most noteworthy :—

Carnivora.—Royal tiger, leopards (of three kinds rufus, black, and tawny), Malay bear, monkey tiger, (*artictis penicillata*), otter, Malay and Zibeth civet cats, tiger cat, leopard cat, and wild dog.

Pachydermatæ.—Elephant, rhinoceros (single and double horned), Malay tapir, and wild pig.

Ruminantia.—Rusa deer or elk, brow-antlered rusa, barking deer, hog deer, goat, antelope, bison, wild bull (*bos sondaicus*).

Rodentia.—Hare, porcupine, and several kinds of squirrels and rats.

Quadrumana.—White-handed and two-lock gibbon, several species of monkey, lemur, and sloth.

Products.—There are several valuable spontaneous products in the country. Of these, teak (*tectona grandis*) is the most important; the annual gross revenues of the Forest Department for the last four years, exceeding £80,000.

Perhaps next in importance, and exceeding teak, as an article of general demand, in some portions of the country, is the wood-oil tree (*dipterocarpus lævis*).

These magnificent giants of the forests, whose stems often measure from twenty to thirty feet in circumference, and shoot up without a single branch for more than one hundred feet, provide, as remarked by Mr. O'Riley, a never-failing supply of an article almost as indispensable to the people as food and clothing.

The following trees, used for house-building purposes, are common:—*Eng* (dipterocarpus grandiflora), *pyinma* (lagerstrœmia regina), and *pyingado* (xylia dolabriformis).

Thengan (hopea odorata) is much prized for boat hulls, some of which, untouched by the adze, have been known to fetch as much as £80. The solid cart-wheels of the country are generally made of this timber, as well as of *padouk* (plerocarpus dalbergisides). The latter is a beautiful wood, nearly equal in appearance to mahogany.

The celebrated black varnish tree, *thitsay* (melanorrhœa usitatissima), so much in demand for the manufacture of the circular and other boxes peculiar to the country, is common. It was the only tree, apparently, which was conserved under the Burmese

régime, and so highly was it prized then, that persons injuring it were severely punished.

Among other spontaneous products may be mentioned cardamums, beeswax, honey, dammar, cinnamon, gamboge, with numerous other drugs and gums of more or less commercial value, but which, in common with much mineral wealth, must remain dormant till the almost impracticable hill country is opened by means of roads.

The whole of the vegetable kingdom not actually poisonous is appreciated by the Burmese and Karens. In addition to the common fruits and vegetables, the following indigenous forest products are used as food by them :—Mayan, pierardia, edible salacca, bread fruit, Otaheite gooseberry, earth nuts, and Chinese dates, sandoricum, horse mango, and hog chesnut.

Rice is the staple product of the country. It is said there are thirty varieties grown in the lowlands ; some soft and sweet, intended for home consumption, others of harder grain, more fit for export.

The Karens have distinctive names for more than forty kinds of all colours, from pearly white to jet-black. Different methods of rice cultivation obtain in the lowlands and on the hills. In the former, the seed is either sown broad-cast in the inundated fields or transplanted from nurseries in June, and is not reaped till December ; the latter is planted in April, while the ground is yet dry, and the harvest is gathered in some portions of the country as early as August, in others a month or two later.

The Yabines and Karens cultivate the mulberry, and, rearing silkworms extensively, supply the market with silk.

Arakan tea is proverbially excellent.

Different kinds of tobacco thrive remarkably well. Cotton flourishes, but the cultivation might be improved and increased with advantage.

English vegetables grow well in the cold season.

Wheat and grain have been tried with success. The culture of English potatoes, except of diminutive proportions, has hitherto failed, but it is hoped it may yet prove successful. The best substitute for them is the Karen potatoe (*dioxorea fasciculata*), the best vegetable produced in Burma.

Population.—No regular census of the people has ever been taken even in British territory, but a rough census is annually prepared by the Thoogyees, or tax collectors, when submitting their returns of capitation tax, recording results sufficiently accurate for all practical purposes. But, owing to the exigency of the statistical returns for Imperial use, the published records do not classify the population of British Burma, so as to exhibit all the prominent races of which it is composed; and as the Karens, who next to the Burmese, are not even noted, it is, of course, impossible to estimate their numbers therefrom. Roughly speaking, then, perhaps we would not be far wrong to allow 600,000 of the $2\frac{1}{2}$ millions in British Burma, 200,000 for Karennee, and a like number for the various tribes in Upper Burma, as well as those to be found between Karennee and Western China and in Siamese territory, making in all a population of about one million.

Of the ancient records or chronology of the Golden Chersonese there are no credible materials,

and what records we have were apparently compiled by persons who either drew on their imaginations for their facts, or in subservience to the ambition of their kings, under whose direct influence they were inspired, endeavoured to prove the descent of the royal race from the people who brought them letters, science, and religion. Some of the leading races are distinguished by having elaborately written histories of themselves from the earliest times, which are kept with religious care in their monasteries. These histories or *thamines*, as they are called by the Burmese, replete as they are with imaginary dates, and with the imaginary doings of their semi-deified monarchs, are nevertheless more or less authentic records of events since the twelfth century, excepting where they are disfigured, as occasionally is the case, by manifest perversion of fact, in cases where an obstinate adherence to truth may have been deemed unadvisable.

The chief of these is the *Maha Radza Weng*, or the "Chronicles of the Kings of Burma."

We are so fortunate as to have an authentic copy of this valuable work in our possession, which we procured from the royal library at Mandelay, and have also had access to two or three English translations thereof. Of these the most valuable is by Sir Arthur Phayre.

As we are diffident in our abilities to improve his rendering by any attempt of our own at translation, it appears to us that a few extracts of his version, giving a succinct account of the antecedents of one of the most prominent peoples in

this region, appears, therefore, a fitting prelude to our notices of a people to whom they stood in the relation of the dominant power.

The *Maha Radza Weng* commences with describing the self-development of the world, and the appearance of man therein. The system of cosmogony has, together with the Buddhist philosophy and religion, been derived from India, and the Burmese kings profess to trace their descent from the Buddhist kings of Kappilawot, of the Sakya tribe, to which race Gautama Buddha belonged. The history contains the Buddhist account of the first formation of human society; the election of a king, and the grant to him of a share of the produce of the soil. These legends constitute to this day the foundation of the authority, temporal and spiritual, of the Burmese kings. The foundation of that authority they continually refer to, and it is ever present to the minds of their subjects. It is proper, therefore, briefly to record that portion of their national history.

The history opens with announcing that, after a cycle of the great revolutions of the universe, wherein worlds are destroyed by fire, by water, and by air, had elapsed, the present earth emerged from a deluge. A delicious substance, like the ambrosia of the gods, was left by the subsiding water spread over the earth. The throne of Gautama first appeared above the water. At the same time, the beings called Brahma, who live in the upper world or heavenly regions, had accomplished their destinies. They then changed their state, and became beings with corporeal frames, but

without sex.* Their bodies shone with their own light, and full of joy they soared like birds in the expanse of heaven. From eating of the ambrosia the light of the bodies of these beings gradually declined, and because of the darkness they became sore afraid. Because of the glory of those beings, and because also of the eternally established order of nature, the sun, of gold within and glass without, fifty yoodzanas† in diameter, and one hundred and fifty in circumference, appeared above the great Eastern island (of the solar system) and threw forth his light. The inhabitants of the world were then relieved from fear, and called the sun (in Pali) *Shoo-ree-ya.*

In like manner the first appearance of the moon and stars is described; the central mount *Myenmo* (Meru) and the whole sekya or solar system. The history then proceeds :—

"Of the world's first inhabitants, some were handsome, some not handsome. As the handsome ones despised the others, in consequence of the haughty evil thoughts thus engendered, the ambrosia of the earth disappeared, and they ate of the crust of the earth. Then, in process of time, selfishness and desire increasing, the earth's surface crust disappeared. They then ate of a sweet creeping plant; when that disappeared, the Thalay rice came up, which, as they gathered it, was re-

* It is from these beings that the people called by Europeans Burmans, Burmas, or Burmese, take their name. In the Burmese language the name is written *Mran-ma* or *Mram-ma*, and is generally pronounced by themselves *Ba-má.*

† A modern *yoodzana* equals about 13 English miles.

newed morning and evening. Placing it in a stone jar, flames issued, and it was prepared for food. Its flavour was whatever the eater desired. From eating of this food human passions were developed, and the beings became men and women. Then, as evil deeds began to prevail, the wise censured and severely treated the others. The latter wishing to hide their evil deeds, built houses. Then, the lazy among them having stored up the food, the Thalay rice acquired husk, with a coating of coarse and fine bran, and where it once had appeared it did not sprout again. They then said, 'It is good for us to divide among us the Thalay rice plants, to possess each his own.' Then they distributed the Thalay rice plants. After that, an unprincipled one among them, fearing that his own share would not suffice, stole the share of another. Once and twice he was warned; in the third offence he was beaten. From that time theft, falsehood, and punishment existed."

The world's first inhabitants then assembled, and thus consulted together: "Now wicked times have come; therefore let us select an upright, religious man—one having the name and authority of a ruler, to reprove those who deserve reproof, and to expel those who deserve to be expelled, and let us give him a tenth share of our Thalay rice." This was agreed to, and an excellent man, full of glory and authority, the embryo of our Gautama Phra, being entreated to save them, was elected king, and was called Mahâ-tha-ma-dá."

This history represents King Mahâ-tha-ma-dá as reigning for an *athen-khye*, being a period represented by a unit and one hundred and forty cyphers.

He had twenty-eight successors, who reigned in the countries of *Malla* and *Kotha-watler*. The next dynasty, which numbered fifty-six kings, reigned in *Ayooz-za-poora*. The next, of sixty kings, reigned in Bara-na-thee, or Benares. Then eighty-four thousand kings reigned in *Kap-pi-la*, the native country of Gautama, in distant after times. Next thirty-six kings reigned in Hatlipoora. Numerous other dynasties are mentioned, which are represented as established in various countries of India, and as lasting for many millions of years.

Having brought down the narrative of events to the death of Buddha Gautama, the first volume of the work proceeds to give an account of the geography of the world of *Dzam-boo-dee-pa*, where the Buddhist kings reigned.

The second volume opens with the following words :—

"In the first part we have narrated the history of the kings, commencing from Mahâ-tha-ma-dá up to the time of the excellent Phra Gautama, there being 334,569 kings in lineal succession. In this second portion we shall narrate the history of thirty kings commencing from Peim-ba-thara up to King Dham-ma-thau-ka."

The history of Dham-ma-thau-ka, as the great supporter of Buddhism, the founder and encourager of missions, is narrated at considerable length.

The second volume of the history ends with the death of this king.

The third volume of the *Maha Radza Weng* commences with the direct history of the Burmese kings, in the following words :—

"We shall now relate the first commencement of the long line of the Mrau-má kings in the great country of Tagoung; the origin of all the kings who have reigned in the land; and also treat of the first foundation and the progress of Divine religion in the Mrau-má country under the Mrau-má kings."

From the history we learn, that at an early period there were three tribes in the valley of the Irrawaddy, who appear to have been the progenitors of the present nation. These tribes are called Byoo or Pyoo, Kam-yan or Kanran, and Thek or, by the Arakanese, Sák.* They probably were three allied tribes, more closely connected with each other than were others of the same original stock, settled in the Upper Irrawaddy Valley, or on the adjoining mountains. I see no reason for doubting that they had found their way to the valley of the Irrawaddy by what is now the track of the Chinese caravans from Yunan, which track debouches at Bhamo on the river. There they probably remained for many ages without being disturbed by any superior tribe.

We may then conclude that the rude tribes inhabiting the valley of the Upper Irrawaddy, who at that time, like the hill tribes of to-day, worshipped only the spirits of the woods, the hills, and the streams, were converted and civilized by Buddhist missionaries from Gangetic India. A monarchy was then established at Tagoung, which gradually extended its authority, and appears from the history to have been overturned by an irruption of (so-called)

* Sák is still the name of a small hill tribe in Arakan. It is similar in sound to the name of the tribe Gautama belonged to.

Tartars and Chinese. The names given to the invaders are Ta-ret and Ta-rook. The latter word is evidently the same as Turk, and is applied at the present day by the Burmese to the Chinese generally. The destruction of the kingdom of Ta-goung led to the establishment of a monarchy at Tha-re-khet-te-ya, near the modern Prome. Whatever this event, as told, may really mean, we may consider it as certain, that the tribes dwelling in the country round Tagoung, where Buddhism and some degree of civilization had been established under a powerful dynasty, were overwhelmed by a horde of invaders from the north-east, and that many of them found a refuge among their kinsmen the Pyoos.

Burmese history, elaborate though it be, is absolutely misleading and consequently worthless in an ethnological point of view, especially as regards their origin and the routes by which they arrived in the country they now occupy. For being based on the assumption that their kings are the lineal descendants of the royal race of Kappilawot in Hindostan, to which the founder of their religion belonged, an emigration from thence to Burma is actually invented for the natural history. Now when we come to consider the impracticable nature of the country between the Ganges and the Irrawaddy, and the little inducements which the valley of the latter would afford to tribes which believed that Gangetic India was the most favoured land of the earth; and when we also recollect that so sea-hating a people would hardly have gone on a voyage of discovery for the purpose of colonizing an unknown land; the supposed emigration, therefore, seems very impro-

bable. The more so, when we look upon the face of the typical Burman, which has his Tartar genealogy marked upon it in characters that cannot be mistaken.

The Karens, it is true, cannot boast of historical records, but their real traditions, which point to Central Asia as their ancient home, and which also indicate the route by which they came therefrom, are far more trustworthy, and consequently of much more ethnological value than the pretentious productions of the more civilized races that surround them. Their religious traditions especially, which correspond so minutely with many of the most prominent events in the Bible, and incidentally corroborate what we may call their geographical traditions, have earned for them a deep and intelligent interest among Christian communities, which the marvellous success of the efforts of Christian missionaries for their evangelization has enhanced.

A critical examination of their physical and moral attributes, their mythology, their manners and customs, and the affinities of their language, afford us at the same time considerable aid, if not unerring data, in arriving at reasonable conclusions in reference to their archaic history, indicated perhaps somewhat faintly in these traditions.

Burmese history does not assist us in our investigations in regard to the Karens. The meek and lowly inhabitants of the plains were treated with contempt by their former masters, and little or no information could be procured about them. The same may be said in reference to the more independent tribes to the north, for, with that arrogance which is characteristic of the Burmese, they estimated the

neighbouring hill-tribes as little removed from brute beasts, and disdaining to inquire into their habits, customs, or capabilities for improvement, superciliously disposed of them under the generic name of *Ayain*, or "wild men."

Thus, on our occupation of the country, we found ourselves hampered with a people declared to be so wild and so untamable, that none, excepting a few adventurous petty traders, ever penetrated their country out of hearing of the guns of Toungoo.

The annals of the Portuguese, who early in the 16th century established a maritime empire in these regions, with Malacca for their capital, contain much valuable information connected with the affairs of the Golden Chersonese, during the 16th and early part of the 17th centuries, but close somewhat abruptly about the year 1640, when the Portuguese power was on the decline. The authorities for its later history are taken from the *thamines* already noticed, which deserve far greater attention, and their translators more encouragement, than is at present given them; from the accounts of Fitch and other English travellers, the experiences of Symes, Cox, Crawfurd, and other envoys, as well as from other sources, official and personal. From all these we can gather a succinct and tolerably connected narrative of events connected with the Burmese, Shans, and Talaings, especially from the time that Alompra founded the dynasty which is still reigning at Mandelay. But in these accounts we learn little of the ruder peoples which inhabit the country.

What is now known as Pegu was the ancient kingdom of the Mōns or Talaings, a people dis-

tinguished by a language that apparently bears no affinity in its vocables to Chinese or any of the Indo-Chinese dialects, and is not cognate with any of the cultivated tongues in Hindostan. Little can be gathered of their ancient history, excepting what relates to the introduction of the Buddhist religion by Asoka's missionaries.

Burmese concurs with Talaing history in representing the Talaings as a civilized people, and in possession of the Buddhist scriptures at any earlier period than the nations around them.*

Overlapping the Burmese at numerous points, and found from the borders of Numnipoor to the heart of Yunan, and from the valley of Assam to Bangkok and Cambodia, are the Shans or Tai, as they call themselves; "everywhere Buddhist, everywhere to some extent civilized, and everywhere speaking the same language with little variation; a circumstance very remarkable amid the infinite variety of tongues that we find among tribes in the closest proximity of location and probable kindred throughout those regions." † Their ancient glories when the kingdom of Pong (on the north of Burma) existed, have departed, and the utter want of political unity, which is such a distinguishing characteristic of the Indo-Chinese peoples, had split the race into a great number of unconnected principalities; all their states, excepting the kingdom of Siam (which preserves its independence), being subject or tributary to Burma, China, Cochin China, or Siam.

Besides these prominent races which have played

* See "J. A. O. S.," 4.

† Yule's "Mission to Ava," 291.

the historic part on the field of Indo-China, there is, as Colonel Yule says, "A vast mass of races of inferior importance, and generally termed *wild* or *uncivilized.*

"The fact is that their civilization varies through every degree of the scale except the highest. Many of them are inferior to the so-called civilized races whom they border, only in the absence of a written language, while others are head hunters in almost the lowest depths of savagery. Some are as elaborate in the cultivation of their rice terraces as the Chinese themselves; others migrate in the forest from site to site, burning down at each remove new arras on which to carry out their rude husbandry. Nearly all on the frontiers of the states claiming civilization are the victims of kidnappers and international slave dealers.

"Among those, so to call them, uncivilized tribes, none are more worthy of note and of interest than those called *Karen*, of whom so great a number have, in our own time, become Christians, chiefly under the teaching of American missionaries. Even before this closer claim a new interest arose, they were remarkable for the value of their traditions, both religious and what we may call historical."*

It is with reference to these Karens, of whom hitherto only fragmentary information has been recorded that we claim, and shall endeavour to justify, the interest of our readers.

The Karens, as will be explained hereafter, are divided into three great families, the *Sgan*, the *Pwo*,

* Address as President of Geographical Section of the British Association for the Advancement of Science. 1871.

and the *Bghai* or *Bwé*, which are again subdivided into numerous clans.

The Sgaus and Pwos proper form the bulk of the agricultural population in the delta of the Irrawaddy, and also have their habitat in the Sittang Valley and its adjacent mountain ranges as far as 18° 30′ of north latitude.

Above this the Pwos practically disappear, while the Sgaus have comparatively few representatives, the bulk of whom are confined to the Pegu Yoma range and its numerous spurs. The Sgaus and Pwos are also found on the interior of the Tenasserim division, as well as beyond the boundary in Siamese territory, and in the Salwen Valley, about as far north as they are to the west.

The Bwés are met with immediately above the Sgaus and Pwos, on the left bank of the Sittang, and on the water-shed between it and the Salwen.

North of the Bwés, mixed up with the Shans and extending as far north as to touch the Kakhyens and Singphos, in north latitude 24° 25′, are numerous tribes, such as the *Yens*, *Yenis*, *Yen-baws*, *Yen-seiks*, and others of whom comparatively little is known. East of the last, and located on the basins of the Salwen and the Mekong, and reaching as far as Esmok, the border town of China, are the *Kakúis*, *Kakúas*, *Lawas*, and others mentioned by Captain (now General) McLeod.

All these in their manners and customs, as well as physical peculiarities, seem allied to the Bwé or hill Karens of Burma. Some of them even exceeding in ferocity the most savage specimens of the latter; in that international tribal feuds, which seem

the normal condition of all, are supplemented on the part of the *Lawas*, by raids simply for the purpose of procuring human heads, which are much prized as decorations for their houses, as well as for the purpose of propitiating the genii of the woods, hills, and crops.

The Karen highlanders compare unfavourably with the lowlanders in general physique, although in the exhibition of a warlike and independent spirit, they are immeasurably their superiors ; just as the sturdy little Ghoorkhas, insignificant as they appear beside the tall and martial-looking Hindustani Sepoys, excel them in "dash," as well as in many other soldierly qualities. Secure in the almost unassailable positions which they affect on the lichen covered heights of the mountain systems near the Sittang and the Salwen, or in the obscure gorges, where perennial streams, cool and refreshing and pure as crystal, come tumbling over huge granite boulders, and wake up the normal stillness of the forests through which they tread, the hill tribes have ever showed a bold front and indomitable perseverance, in resisting oppression, and by their self-reliance have commanded the respect which their reputation for turbulent and undisciplined behaviour, has not a little enhanced.

The people in the plains, on the other hand, with no such extraneous advantages of position to boast of, endeavoured to escape observation by hiding in the dense forests, or in the huge prairies of elephant grass which cover the face of the country, or by resorting to secluded nooks far from the haunts of other peoples, and meekly accepting the degraded

position they held towards the dominant race as a matter of course, humbly endured the troubles and indignities they were called upon to suffer. Patient and unrepining as they were under their grievous wrongs, they felt them not the less acutely. But hopeless and dismal as their lot appeared, they were, however, buoyed up with a firm conviction that ere long they would be delivered from this bondage.

It has long been recognized as almost an axiom that different races cannot live long together without a process of assimilation commencing which extends to the various physical and mental attributes that distinguish the human race.

It is also maintained that in spite of geographical barriers that may exist, and the prejudices that may intervene for a time between man and his fellows, these results may be anticipated sooner or later.

The rule, it is said, more particularly applies to those cases where either civilized peoples meet or where they come in contact with ruder tribes. In the latter cases, the superior race, while perhaps revolutionizing many of the manners and customs, habits of thought, religion, and language of the inferior, cannot help being influenced, more or less in turn.

In no country is this argument more convincing than in the region of the Golden Chersonese, for at this moment, a process of assimilation and absorption is going on, which is fast removing the characteristic differences between peoples who hitherto played as prominent a part in its history as the English, French, Germans, and others have played in the history of Europe.

As an instance of our meaning, we may cite the Mōns or Talaings, who formerly were the ruling power on the sea-board, but who have, within a comparatively speaking recent period, been so incorporated with the Burmese, as to have practically disappeared.

Dr. Anderson predicates the same fate for the Shans located in the central basin of the Irrawaddy, near Bhamo.

The state of affairs that has long existed between the Burmese and Karens, appears, however, exceptional.

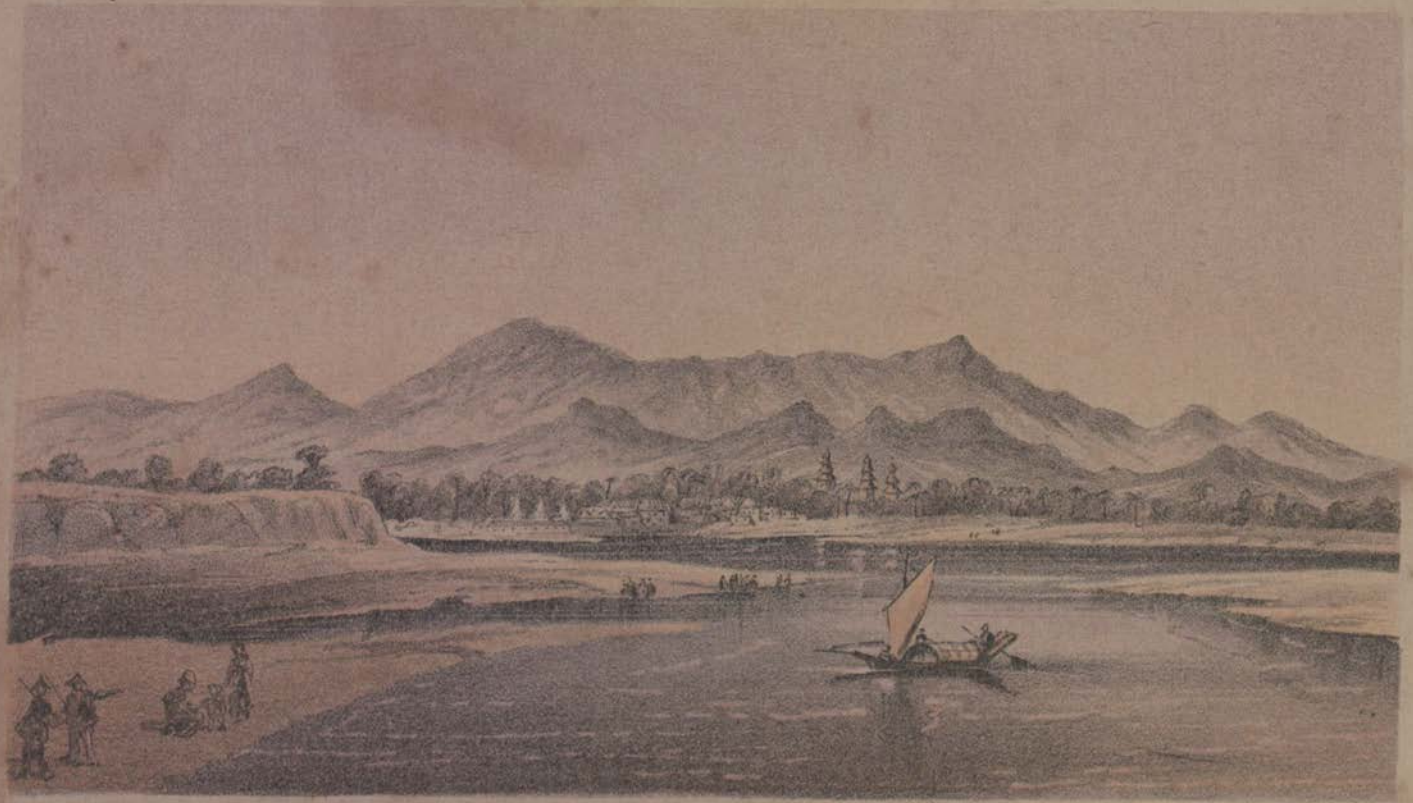
The tribes in the plains, though influenced by Burmese contact, have not been affected to an appreciable extent, considering the length of time the two races have been living together.

Conservation has been carried out more in its integrity by the wilder tribes on the hills, who are less exposed to the indirect influences to which the others are subject, and who, in their isolated position, influence none and remain uninfluenced by others.

Buddhism, the religion of the Burmese, has made little or no progress with the Karens; but then it must be allowed that the Burmese, though personally bigoted, have liberal views as to the obligations of others, and do not interfere with their religious views in any way.

The Burmese, Shans, and Talaings, on the other hand, although strict Buddhists, still retain as a substratum of their faith, the propitiation of the *Genii loci*, which is the only worship of the Karens who have not been affected by Christianity.

With few sympathies in common; with disdain



Lieut. M. Mahon, 1st.

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VIEW OF BHAMO WITH KAKHYN HILLS.

and oppressive bearing on the one side, and with fear, hatred, and a desire for revenge on the other, the Burmese and Karens have long pursued parallel courses, making little or no attempts to bridge the gulf between them by efforts towards a better social intercourse, or the promotion of the more intimate relationship, as well as humanizing influence of the marriage tie.

The case of the Burmese and Karens is paralleled by that of the Dryans and Aborigines of Bengal, and what Dr. Hunter says of the latter can be equally applied to the former. "Two races," he says, "the one consisting of masters and the other of slaves, are not easily welded into a single nationality. Concession must precede union, and a people have to make some advances towards being one socially before it can be one politically." *

The Karens, from the impetus that has been given to education, and the independent spirit that has been evoked in them under a more liberal system of government, are fast earning for themselves the social position which was denied them by their former masters.

The Karens in relation to the Governing Class.

Dr. Mason, in his work on "Burmah," passes somewhat severe strictures on the governing class of that country in reference to its alleged partiality for the Burmese as compared with the Karens, and this he attributes partly to the fact that the English ruler usually belongs to the "aristocratic classes,"

* "Annals of Rural Bengal," p. 136.

and having no sympathy with his own countrymen, cannot be expected to have any "with the down trodden serfs of the dominant race;" partly from his ignorance of the Karen language, he is obliged to look at everything that concerns the Karens through Burmese spectacles, and partly because he is swayed by the lavish flattery of the Burmese, who thus distance a people who have no word for flattery in their language.

In giving instances of the oppression to which the Karens used to be subject, owing to these shortcomings on the part of their rulers, he is not the less chary in awarding commendation in those cases where he considers an improvement has taken place, and even modifies his extreme views in favour of some officers who distinguished themselves in "raising up" the Karens.

Now while we admit that the charge of partiality may have been deserved in days gone by, and that even now this reproach may not be groundless in some instances;—for, owing to the imperfection of human nature, the wisest among us may succumb to the cajolery of a race who are described as knowing all the weak points of the man with whom they deal, as being "as cunning as the old serpent in Eden, and as well able to beguile men as he was to deceive women;" still, whatever sins of omission may be brought to the account of those concerned in the administration of the country—who, by the way, can hardly be said to belong to the aristocratic class—the comparative want of sympathy with the Karens must be attributed to other causes than caste prejudice. As well might we say that the

partiality which the American missionaries who labour among the Karens evince in favour of their converts is attributable to a democratic spirit which has no sympathy with the aristocracy.

Oppressively treated as the Karens were for many generations by their old masters, it naturally takes time for so diffident and so suspicious a people to have that confidence in the intentions of the officers of Government towards them, as it is the wish of the latter to inspire.

Encased, too, as they are in a hopeless imperturbability and incorrigible apathy that encourages them to sit down meekly under wrongs, unless some one else takes the trouble and responsibility off their hands, they afford a strong contrast to the Burmese, who naturally possessing the art of "savoir faire" to a high degree, as well as a considerable amount of self possession, with a genial and independent bonhomie especially taking, contrive to have more attention paid to them than the Karens, who appear dumbfounded, let their case be what it may.

There is also a strong tendency on the part of the latter to make a "stalking horse" of their pastor and master, in case they have dealings with a Government official, and by so doing put both in a false position. They even persist in doing so in cases where, to obviate such necessity, one of their own people, chosen by themselves, and able and willing to help them, has been appointed for the express purpose of assisting them in all matters which they should have occasion to negotiate.

Some missionaries of our acquaintance have, we

know, done their best to teach the Karens to be more independent, while others, we are sorry to say, encourage them in an opposite course, by not taking sufficient trouble to disabuse their followers of the idea they hold of the impossibility of obtaining justice of any sort without the help of the missionaries. So far is this carried out in some instances that the latter occasionally entrust parties in cases before the Courts with letters to the judge on the bench, a proceeding which is highly objectionable, not only because it gives the Karen an idea he can obtain justice more efficaciously and far less expensively than any one else can proceeding in the usual way, for it affords the Burmese a handle to imagine that it is in opposition to that spirit of fair play which he expects to get when he appeals to an English judge, but it also tends to lessen the sympathy which ought to exist between the governed and their rulers, which all earnest men, whether clerical or lay, should be so desirous of promoting. In recording these remarks in reference to a small minority of that admirable body of men to whom we owe so much, we can at the same time heartily endorse the following apposite remarks recorded by Sir A. Phayre, in a minute written in May, 1863, in reference to the results of missionary work in the Toungoo district :—

"Any one," he says, "who supposes that such a change could have been wrought among a savage people by missionaries without their 'mixing themselves up with the secular affairs' of the people, I am compelled to differ with very materially.

"It was neither desirable nor possible for mis-

sionaries earnestly bent on doing their duty, to avoid teaching the people in every walk of life, or to abstain from advising or leading them in their social progress. Such a people too, oppressed by the Burmese, when opportunity offered, would naturally look to the missionaries as their advocates and protectors. Even with the Karens in the plains, situated among the Burmese, such action of Christian missionaries is most beneficial. I could name many missionaries, both Catholic and Protestant, to whom I am under deep obligations for having brought to my notice grievances great and petty which otherwise would probably have never reached me.

"A district officer who fails to avail himself of such means of honest and disinterested information, I consider neglects a very efficient help to the performance of his duty."

In the deep despondency that occasionally oppressed the Karens under the old régime, a cheering thought, like a ray of light in the gloom of their morbid imaginings, encouraged them to look forward with hope, and to recognize a silver lining in every cloud that overshadowed them.

Their traditions taught them that they were to look to the West for their deliverers—the white foreigners who were to come by the ocean, bringing with them the Book, once theirs, which was to make them acquainted with the true God, and free them from the yoke of the oppressors.

The advent of the English was accordingly hailed by the Karens with a delight that was intensified by the fact that the American mis-

sionaries brought with them the Book for which they had so long yearned.

An opening was accordingly made and eagerly taken advantage of by the Karens, their new rulers, and their new teachers, laying the foundation of a feeling of mutual confidence, which has year by year become more intelligent.

An impetus was given at the same time to the spread of Christianity, resulting in a success that has placed the Karen Mission in the position it so deservedly fills, as perhaps the most promising in the world—a mission that claims our widest sympathy, not only because of the triumph of the sacred cause to which its servants have devoted their lives, and to which everything else must be with them subservient, but because that victory has been achieved by the voluntary agency of the people themselves, who gave their substance, and in some cases their very lives, as an earnest of the sincerity of their religion.

It also deserves the cordial recognition of all thinking men, for the fearlessness and tact with which it has attacked and broken down the strongholds of ignorance, superstition, and savagery, fighting a good fight in the cause of civilization, not indeed with carnal weapons, but having as it were for its motto, the grand watchword that has been handed down to us from the very dawn of Christianity—

"Peace on earth, and good will towards men."

CHAPTER II.

ETYMOLOGY OF THE WORD KAREN.—CHARACTER AND PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE KARENS.

Etymology of the word Karen.*

Karen or Kayen† is a name we have adopted from the Burmese, the etymology of which, as far as we can ascertain, has not been satisfactorily determined. It conveniently designates a people, divided into three great families, comprising numerous clans; having, it is said, a language of common origin, embracing many dialects, but without any common designation for themselves.

In this respect they do not differ from the peoples of Hindústan, dubbed Hindús or "black men," by the Persians, and called so ever since. The same may be said in regard to our own ancestors, till the seventh century, when, by common consent, the term Angle, or the name of one of their tribes, was adopted as a general appellation for the whole race.

From Mr. Cross we learn that the word Karen is supposed to bear two significations, "aborigines,"

* This paper originally appeared in the "Phœnia," vol. iii, No. 28, for July, 1872.

† The *r* in the Arkanese dialect is invariably *y* with the Burmese Proper.

and "wild people in general"; and that a popular error prevails among Europeans generally that the Burmese call the people Karen because they are uncivilized as compared with themselves. This error, he says, arises from confounding two Burmese words; *yine* "savage, wild," and *yin* or *yen* "prior or first." *Yine*, as he justly points out, would be used indiscriminately by the Burmese, in reference to any wild tribe, and would even be applied by them towards their own people if characterized by uncouth or savage habits.

At the same time, he thinks that it is evident that they regard the people whom they call Karen or Kayen, as the aborigines, because they found them occupying the country when they first took possession of it. We have frequently suggested this idea when consulting monks or other learned or intelligent Burmese, in regard to the derivation of the word; but, unless we put it so as to partly beg the question—when of course a polite Burman will always accept the cue—we never obtained an answer sufficiently clear to justify us in accepting the proposition of Mr. Cross.

Another consideration that militates against, if it does not prove fatal to his interpretation, is that *yin* also signifies "civilized," in antithesis to *yine* "uncivilized;" so that the Burmese in talking of the Karens, frequently discriminate between those that have been affected by civilization, and the wilder tribes by calling them Kayin-yin, "civilized Karens" and Kayin-yine, "uncivilized Karens," respectively.

Karen has been written in various ways by

various writers, according to their different notions of spelling. Thus Father Sangermano* styles the people Carians, and Symes,† who first heard of them from Sangermano, refers to them as Carayners‡ or Carrianers. Cox, whose otherwise interesting narrative is conspicuous for its ludicrous perversity as regards rendering the English equivalent of Burmese names, disposes of them as Carrians:‡ while in Crawfurd's more ambitious work, the author, noticing the name Karian, explains that it should be written Karen, and yet in his next chapter he alludes to the people as Karyens.§

There is some excuse then for the fancies of some authorities, which have connected the origin of the Karens with M. Pauthier's Caraian—the Carajan of Marco Polo—which we know to be Yunan. This fallacy has been disposed of by Colonel Yule in his recent work.‖

To the Buddhist Bishop of Toungoo we are indebted for a suggestion that Karen is derived from a Pali word meaning "dirty feeders," or "people of inferior caste," and from a note thereon favoured us by Dr. Mason, we find that the Burmese compilers of the Pali vocabularies, render Kirata, "mountaineers, or outcasts of India," by the term Karen, simply because they were a people of similar habits; and again in Wilson's Sanskrit Dictionary, the word

* Sangermano's "Burmese Empire," 34.

† Symes' "Embassy to Ava," 207 and 464.

‡ Cox's "Burmhan Empire," 430.

§ Crawfurd's "Embassy to the Court of Ava," vol. i, 93 and 170.

‖ Yule's "Marco Polo," i, 42 and 43.

Kiráta is defined "a savage, one of the barbarous tribes that inhabit woods and mountains—the Kinhadæ of Arian."*

But these examples prove nothing, and must be taken simply for what they are worth.

The generic name that the Shans give the Karens in their own country is Yang† which is softened in Burmese into Yen or Yein. Admitting this, and taking Mr. Cross's theory so far as it goes, we are still in the dark, as to the signification of the particle KA; although possibly it may be urged that among the affinities of Karens with the Yuma dialects, is a tendency to affect the prefix KA, which it sometimes unites with the root.‡

The Burmese in naming wild tribes have taken advantage of some peculiarity in their dress or occupation to distinguish them; thus we have "Red Karens," "White Karens, "Great butterflies," "Little butterflies," "Wild bees," etc., or else they adopt the term used by different tribes, in speaking of themselves.

* Dr. Mason humorously remarks, "Admitting this word to designate the Karens, we may say the Karens were known to the Greeks!" He might also have added that Karian, the name of one of the Grecian barbarous tribes, mentioned by Homer, is identical with the equivalent of Karen as given by early writers.

† Dr. Mason, J. A. S. B.

‡ Mr. St. John, noticing that the root *Ka* is met with in other names, such as *Ka-h-kyen*, *Ka-koo*, *Ka-do*, all tribal distinctions, thinks "it is plain that *ka* is equal to the Chinese *man*, though it has now lost its signification. *Ren* or *yen* is probably the Burmese root meaning 'mild,' or 'civilized,' for the Karens are the mildest and most civilized of the wild tribes."—"Phœnia," vol. iii, No. 27.

Dr. Mason points out that Karen is sufficiently near Kayong and Kaya, the names that the Gaykhos and Red Karens give them, to be the same word. It is certainly nearer than the equivalents of Karen, furnished by the European writers we have quoted; and as the Gaykhos and Red Karens were probably the first tribes with which the Burmese came in contact, before they conquered Pegu, Dr. Mason's suggestion as to the origin of the word, commends itself to careful attention.

In the "Transactions of the Ethnological Society," vol. v, Sir A. Phayre, quoting from Mr. Logan, says, "The root of Mranma is *ran*, one of the forms of a widely spread Himalaic body for man, Karen has the same root with the guttural in place of the labial prefix." Mranma, which accords with the Arakanese pronunciation of the Burmese orthography, would under ordinary circumstances be Myenma, in the dialect of Pegu and Burma Proper, but is arbitrarily pronounced Bamá, hence our word Burma.

Sir A. Phayre, on the authority of the "Chronicles of the Kings of Burma," or *Maha Radza Weng*, records in the same article, that "at an early period there were three tribes in the valley of the Irrawaddy, who appear to be the progenitors of the present Burmese nation. These tribes are called Byoo or Pyoo, Kanyan or Kanran, and Thek, or by the Arakanese Sak."

Kanran softened as above explained would be Kenyen or Kenren. The consonant *n*, too, when final in the first syllable of a word of two or three syllables, is in Burmese often mute, so we should

then have Keyen or Keren. And in fact Father Sangermano does eliminate the *r*.*

If it be true, as Sir A. Phayre thinks probable, that these three tribes were the progenitors of the present Burmese nation, it is just possible that the title of Kanran, which is no longer applied by the Burmese to any tribe of cognate origin, may have been transferred to the Karens, just as Talaing,† the appellation by which the original Peguans or Mōns

* When referring to this sect of the Burmese he says that in consequence of a great disturbance that took place in the Royal city during the reign of Ahiedia, "all the citizens divided themselves into three parties, who afterwards formed three different nations, the Byú, the Charan (Kharan), and the Burmese."—Sangermano's "Burmese Empire," 41.

† Talaing "is probably derived from the word Telinga, and hence it appears that the tribes of the Upper Irrawaddy, separated during long ages from the kindred tribes to the south of them, only came to know the Mōn after these latter had settlements of Telingas on their coasts. These people, no doubt, extended their commerce into the interior, and hence the name easily changed into Talaing, came to be given to the whole population. The same results of a partial knowledge of a leading race may still be seen. Until comparatively late years, the Burmese mixed up English and all other Europeans, with the natives of India, in one common appellation of Kulá or Western Foreigners; and it is only since the war with the British in 1825–26 that they have learnt to distinguish between the most prominent of the nations, lying west of them."—"Trans. Eth. Soc., London," vol. v, 37.

The Burmese Envoy now in England, quoting from the *Yazawōn Thadee-punee* or "Comprehensive History of the Kings," has kindly favoured us with the following note. "Talaing is a compound word derived from *Tee* 'man,' and *dalaing* 'water.' The amphibious habits of the people, and the heavy rain-fall on the seaboard, which was formerly held by them exclusively, probably suggesting this cognomen."

are still known, may (as suggested by Sir A. Phayre) have been derived from the Telingas, a Hindu race which formerly had extensive settlements on the Burmese coast.

Dr. F. Porter Smith somewhat authoritatively disposes of a question which has hitherto baffled those most competent to form an opinion thereon, as follows:—"There is little doubt that the word Karen comes from the same root-word as Kara,* the Mongol word for black, conveying also the idea of an inferior or subjugated race. The Chinese call Karens the Wu-man, or the 'black aborigines,' denoting their relationship with the scattered tribes (distinct from the Miau-tsze) which inhabited the south and west parts of China, and are still found as distinct tribes in Kwei-chau and Szch'uen."

But then it is well known that none of the Karen tribes can properly be called black men, while many of them are quite as fair as the Chinese, the girls, in some instances, exhibiting white and red in strong contrast in their faces.

While placing on record the different speculations on the origin of the word which have come to our notice, we would fain hope to enlist the interest of those who have given attention to the subject, in

* Mr. Logan, in his paper on the ethnographical position of the Karens, says, "The attempts to apply several of the names in Marco Polo's geography beginning with Kar or Kara to the Karens, appears to me to have been unsuccessful. The names are Turkish, and the countries and tribes to the north of the Himalayas. *Kara*, black, is a common qualitative in Turkish geographical names—black river, black mountain, &c."—"J. Ind. Arch.," No. 4, p. 382.

view of obtaining a satisfactory solution of this etymological problem.

KARÈN.—CHARACTER.

"The Karens are a meek, peaceful race, simple and credulous, with many of the softer virtues and few flagrant vices. Though greatly addicted to drunkenness, extremely filthy and indolent in their habits, their morals in other respects are superior to many more civilised races."* So wrote Mrs. Judson many years ago, and the description is sufficiently accurate now, when speaking of the comparatively civilised *Sgans* and *Pwos* of the sparsely populated Tenasserim coast, the delta of the Irrawaddy, and the alluvial plains of Pegu; but when we come to the tribes that have their habitat on the slopes of the great watershed of the Sittang and Salwen valleys, and the more northern regions, we find them distinguished for their unrelenting ferocity, and for their turbulent and undisciplined bearing, differing as widely in their moral characteristics from their conquerors of the plains, as in their physical peculiarities.

Tempted by the abundance of available waste land in British Burma, the Karen can indulge his natural nomadic tendencies to their full extent, he therefore "cares as little to be the proprietor of the land on which he erects his booth, as the bird does to own the tree on which it builds its nest, or perches to pick the fruit." But in Karennee, where the population is comparatively great in proportion to the area of the country, he is forced to pay more

* Judson's "Life," vol. i, p. 592.

attention to agriculture, to abandon his roving habits, and to be dependent on the protection that larger and more settled communities afford.

For the most part, however, preferring to live far from the bustle of cities and towns, from choice ensconcing himself in the dense forests, or perching on the eyrie-like heights of almost inaccessible mountains, and perchance hiding in the tall elephant grass on the margins of streams and rivers, the Karen is occasionally found hovèring round the outskirts of civilised life, ministering to its necessities, but not caring to join in its pleasures or in its pursuits. Living with the hitherto dominant race, but not of them, timid and suspicious to a fault, owing perhaps to long endured oppression under the whole régime, the mild *Sgans* and *Pwos* exhibit a strong contrast to the more warlike and independent *Bwês*, who boast with some reason of having ever defied the most strenuous efforts of the Burmese to exercise control over them.

Differing as the various tribes do in many ways, they have many points in common, which allow us to speak of them as a homogeneous whole, but in the very characteristics which admit of this deduction, we find them contrasting still more strongly with the Burmese.

"The Karen," says Dr. Mason, "is the antipodes of a Burman in every respect. The manners of the Burman are polished and winning, of a Karen cruel and repulsive. Flattery is so foreign to his thoughts, that he has no word for it in his language." The typical Karen is certainly very matter-of-fact, and so absolutely devoid of humour, as to be unable to

appreciate a joke of any kind. The Burman, on the contrary, has a keen sense of the ludicrous, and so far does this carry him, that even in a criminal court it is by no means unusual to find the audience (including the prisoner at the bar) giving vent to suppressed merriment, when anything strikes them in a ridiculous light. The Karen rarely exhibits feelings of surprise, joy, gratitude, or admiration, like the more demonstrative Burman, nor is he endowed with a feeling for art like the latter, who decorates his carts, boats, agricultural implements, articles for domestic use, dwellings, rest-houses for travellers, monasteries and other religious buildings, &c., with bold, elaborate carving, unique of its kind.

It must be confessed, however, that the Christian Karen is not so encouraged by the missionaries as he legitimately might be with a view to his developing talent of this kind; for in the building of their chapels, school-houses, dwellings for teachers, and in laying out gardens, the æsthetical seems to be wholly sacrificed to the utilitarian, and no attempt made to establish a sense of order, or to inculcate the love of the beautiful, characteristics in which the Karen is lamentably deficient.

The difference between the Malay and Papuan, as described by Mr. Wallace,* might, *mutatis mutandis*, be applied to the Karen and the Burman respectively. He says:—"The Malay is bashful, cold, undemonstrative, and quiet; the Papuan is bold, impetuous, excitable, and noisy; the former is grave, and seldom laughs; the latter is joyous and

* "Trans. Eth. Soc. Lond.," vol. iii, pp. 204, 205.

laughter-loving; the one conceals his emotions, the other displays them."

"A well-read Burman," remarks Dr. Mason, "has a mind like a schoolman of the middle ages, a repository of obsolete metaphysics and exploded science. A Karen knows nothing, but he acquires knowledge as readily as an Anglo-Saxon, detects a sophism as quickly as a Master of Arts, and requires the reason of things like one grounded in Euclid." *

Judging by the accounts given by the missionaries, the Karens as a race compare unfavourably with the Burmese, who have not been contaminated by the ways of seaport or other large towns, in having little or no regard for truth. "I have never met a Karen," says Dr. Mason, "in the Church or out of it, that when he had committed a wrong, would not tell a falsehood to cover it. What a Karen says he will not do to-day, under a change of circumstances he will do to-morrow, and seem to think it all right."†

With few prejudices, and no deeply-rooted convictions to get rid of, his whole system of religion consists in propitiating the tutelary deities presiding over the various objects of nature; the Karen therefore is naturally more susceptible to the teachings of Christianity than the Burman, who is trammelled with the dogma of metempsychosis and the metaphysical conceptions of the faith of Buddh. As Dr. Mason happily puts it:—"The faith of a Burman is the faith of a man welling up from the deeps of his mental faculties; but the faith of a Karen is the faith of a child with no deep roots in the under-

* Mason's "Burmah," p. 622.

† "J. A. S. B.," vol. xxxvii, part ii, p. 143.

standing. The Karens are like the Samaritans, who at the first hearing, 'with one accord, gave heed unto the things that Phillip spake;' but the Burmans are like the Bereans, who searched the Scriptures daily whether those things were so."*

The success of missionary enterprise among the Karens has had a marvellous influence on their character, for they have not only been weaned from the debasing habits that hitherto characterised the race, but a healthy sense of their obligations as good and loyal citizens has been implanted in their minds, fostering an honest pride that stimulates them to more independent action, and to a sense of the responsibilities they incur in their endeavours to raise themselves, practical proof of which they afford in the commendable liberality with which they support their pastors and village schools, and the alacrity with which they undertake their fair share of the burden of education, recognizing the rights of women to intellectual teaching, and in this respect, at least, creditably contrasting with the Burmese and many more civilised nations.

While it is admitted that, to the casual observer, the uneducated Karen presents an example of the most stolid, nay hopeless stupidity, owing partly to his nervous and suspicious nature, which often prompts him to affect ignorance as the easiest way to evade inquiry or avoid compromising himself; and wild and uncultivated as he naturally is, he is at the same time highly susceptible of social, moral, and religious improvement, when his confidence has been won and his sympathies awakened.

* "Burmah," pp. 621, 622.

KAREN.—PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS.

To the eye of the practised observer there are many shades of difference to be detected between typical specimens of the various tribes.

Locality also seems to affect the countenance, as those who come from the south of Burma can easily be distinguished from individuals of the same tribe that are settled in the north, apart from any peculiarities in their dress or dialect.

Education, too, has its share in producing this result, so much so, that those who have been for some time in the Mission Schools, would be pronounced quite a different type to their wilder brethren.

It would not be easy, nay impossible, without the aid of photography, to picture to the eye of the reader the physical characteristics observable by an ethnological comparison of the different tribes.

As a general rule, it may be conceded that the average height of the Karens equals that of the Burmese, but falls considerably short of the European standard.

Dr. Mason measured 100 men and 100 women of a promiscuous assembly, composed of several tribes, and found two men of 5 ft. 7 in., eight of 5 ft. 6½ in., and all the rest shorter. Of the women, two were 5 ft. 1 in., eight about 4 ft. 10 in., and the rest shorter. From these measurements and long experience, he estimated the height of the men at 5 ft. 4½ in. to 5 ft. 5 in., and of the women at 4 ft. 9 in., which seems to be near the truth.

The Red Karens are, however, an exception to

the rule, in which the male exceeds the female in stature and dimensions, in that their women frequently equal, if they do not surpass, the men in height and bulk.

The Red Karens, Gaykhos, and Northern Bwés, are considerably taller than the hill tribes to the south of them, or the dwellers in the plains, and would probably average 5 ft. 5 in. or more. Mr. O'Riley assumed the ordinary height of the Red Karens to be 5 ft. 7 in., but this we think gives too high a result.

If we exclude these tribes it will be found that the Karens prove an exception to the rule in colder climates, where the Highlanders are stronger and hardier than the Lowlanders; whether it be from effect of locality or other causes, the hill tribes in this respect compare unfavourably with those that inhabit the plains.

The latter are (comparatively speaking) a short, muscular race, the males somewhat resembling the agricultural class of Burmans in this respect, while the females are sturdier, with larger limbs than the Burmese women. Where with them "the body is found square, low, and thick set, with the pelvis broad and expanded, these features in the Kayas are modified to a more upright frame, narrow and sloping shoulders, longer neck and body, with limbs more in proportion to the vertebral column." * Mr. O'Riley was of opinion that the Red Karens preserved a distinctive difference in mould of form and feature, and particularly in their carriage when compared with other tribes. He also observed that the

* O'Riley, "Journ. Ind. Arch." 1859.

skull of the *Kaya* is smaller as a general rule than that of the Shans or other Karens, and that "in form it is an intermediate between the two, the anterior part small and less developed than that of the Karen, and the posterior part so uniform in its outline as to present a semi-spherical appearance when viewed from the front."

The narrow and sunken small black eyes, set far apart, and more or less oblique, but far less so than the Chinese, the high cheek bones, giving to that portion of the face its greatest breadth and a comparative narrowness to the forehead; the flat face with the bridge of the nose very little above it; the square lower jaw, and general contour of the lozenge-shaped countenance, joined to the pyramidal head, with its straight black hair and the absence of beard, found in representative types of all the tribes, unmistakeably stamps the Mongolian origin of the Karen.

It is true that occasional, and sometimes remarkable exceptions to the prevailing type are to be met with, bearing out the description given by Dr. Macgowan* as to their possessing tolerably distinct "Caucasian" features—long faces and straight noses: still the national physiognomy is essentially Indo Chinese.

As far as we could judge there is no prevailing disproportion between different parts of the body, excepting in the case of the lower limbs of the Red Karen female, wherein by the pressure of beads below the knee, and the habit of carrying heavy loads on their backs by a sling passing round the

* "Journ. Ind. Arch.," vol. v, No. 6.

forehead and over the shoulders, the calf of the leg is developed to a size out of all proportion to the rest of the body, and as facetiously remarked by Mr. O'Riley would extort, "the envy of the flower of the London *Jeameses*."

The Karens of the plains are of the same clay colour as the Burmese and other peoples of the Indo Chinese family. Their women, however, are often of a much lighter complexion, and some of the girls who have not been exposed to the sun are very fair.

With the Red Karens the prevailing colour approaches a copper of medium shade and brightness. The hill tribes generally have a tinge between these two; while the *Gaykhos*, *Bwés*, and other tribes to the north are of a dingy white or yellow, resembling Chinese; and not a few are so fair as to show red and white in strong contrast in their countenances. Many of the young girls of the plains as well as the hills are very pleasing in appearance, and in the case of those belonging to the more northern clans there is, says Mr. O'Riley, "an approach in youth to what in our philosophy we term good-looking; but with the universal antipathy to ablution, the features of both sexes become so foul as to hide the natural expression of a clean cuticle, however fair the proportions may be beneath."

The Karens as a rule do not marry with other races, and as the instances where this has occurred with the Burmese are comparatively rare, it is impossible to form any definite conclusions on such intermarriages. Dr. Mason has observed that in a

few cases which have come to his knowledge where Burmans have married Karen women, the offspring have invariably a Burmese cast of countenance.

Marriages between near relations are the rule with some of the tribes, but it is not known whether this practice is attended with any practical results as regards the physical or moral character of the issue.

CHAPTER III.

LANGUAGE.

THE materials available for a full review of the languages that pertain to the Golden Chersonese are very meagre ; all, therefore, that can be done at present is to examine the prominent characteristics of each, compare them with the results that have been arrived at by the study of the dialects best known, and endeavour to ascertain thereby their ethnical affinities. This is confessedly a difficult task, and much must be left to conjecture, owing to our ignorance of the region comprised in the great river system on the extreme east of the Himalaya, whose origin is coincident with the people of monosyllabic speech, and whom it influences to its extremities.

Judging by what we know about this territory, it is reasonable to hope that the most interesting ethnological results may be arrived at by a philological comparison of the languages, and an inquiry into the manners, customs, and traditions of numerous tribes, who, owing either to our apathetic indifference, or to a morbid fear, engendered by over-coloured impressions of the political difficulties attending the exploration of that country, are as little known as if they were the inhabitants of another planet.

From Dr. Hunter we learn that "Bengal, with its dependencies, forms a vast basin, into which every variety of speech has been flowing since prehistoric times," and he is even sanguine enough to believe that "the materials which Turanian scholars, such as Klaproth, A. Remusat, and Castren had to collect, by laborious research or perilous travel, lie at the very door of the Indian missionary or magistrate," and that the study of the aboriginal languages of Bengal is destined to effect, for the "vast ethnical residue," what the study of Sanskrit has done in bringing "to light the affinities of the long separated Aryan members of the inflecting class of languages, the common parentage of two-thirds of civilised mankind."*

It may be, as Dr. Hunter says, that all the three classes into which the languages of the world are divided, meet us upon a common camping-ground in India, and that the gap that Brousen admitted between Chinese, the "monument of antideluvian speech," and other formations, has been bridged over by subsequent philological research, still we must confess that we would prefer to go to the fountain head of the ethnic affinities of the Golden Chersonese, which is doubtless in the territory we have indicated, rather than trust to what has filtered beyond this fluviatile region to which the isolated monosyllabic tongues are confined. Secluded as this region is, it has undergone many changes in its population, owing to incursions of nomadic Tartar hoards and the influx of Chinese. Its language, which appears to have a Chinese basis, while its

* "Rural Bengal," pp. 167, 168.

general character is Scythic, has apparently influenced the hill tribes along the northern margin of the valley of the Ganges, and the eastern borders of Bengal, as well as the Burmese and numerous wilder septs around them, all of which have Mongôloid features, but it appears to us that no satisfactory conclusion can be arrived at till the *terra incognita* we have referred to has been explored.*

The Karen language is rather a family of languages than a single one. It has a base of between two and three thousand roots, and these are found, more or less modified, in the dialect of each tribe, with a few other roots peculiar to that tribe.

Though the Karen dialects are very numerous, all may be reduced to three principal ones, the *Pwo*, the *Sgan*, and the *Bghai* or *Bwé*. The Pwo is characterised by its numerous final consonants, with liquid and nasal sounds, while the Sgan and the Bwé have all their words ending in vowels. The Bwé is also known from the other dialects by its peculiar mode of designating the four digits above five, for which it has no proper names, six, for instance, is literally three couple; seven, three couple plus one; eight, four couple; and nine, four couple plus one.

In this it resembles the first Himalaic tribes of the Ganges, who appear to have brought with them the Chino-Tibetan system of numerals, in one of its older forms. The first four numerals of the native population were adopted by them, and remained current with the Himalaic names, which were ultimately disused. Five remained Himalaic, while

* See Mr. Logan, in "Journ. Ind. Arch." New series. Vol. iii, p. 1.

above it the lower numbers of both systems were repeated.*

It differs, too, in its sibilants, thus it cannot pronounce the aspirated S of the Pwo and the Sgan, but changes it into Sh, a difference of dialect that prevailed in the spoken Hebrew in the days of Jeptha, when the Ephraimites were known by their inability to pronounce Sh. Judges xii, 6.

The arrangement of words in a Karen sentence corresponds with the English, while the Burmese is more like the Latin, hence the Burmese has an affix to mark the objective case, because it precedes the verb, while the Karen has none, because the object is placed after the verb, and is known by its position in the sentence.

The Karen follows the Mōn-Anam formation in this last particular, as well as having "the directive before and the demonstrative, as well as the qualitative, after the substantive. But the possessor precedes the object possessed, as in Burmese and Chinese."†

The Karen, like all Indo-Chinese languages, is monosyllabic, and, like them also, each syllable changes its signification by a change of intonation. Thus, in Burmese, the same root may mean three very different things, by varying the pronunciation. This peculiarity is carried to a greater extent in Karen, for each syllable, as is the case with the Shan and Siamese languages, has five varieties of pronunciation, with as many changes of signification. For instance, in the Sgan dialect, *tau* pronounced in

* Logan, "Journ. Ind. Arch." New series Vol. iii, part i, p. 169.

† Ibid.

an ordinary even tone signifies "to limit, to separate;" when struck on a high note, as when calling to a person in the distance, it means "just, right;" when uttered with a heavy, falling accent, it is the verb "to strike;" when the utterance is retracted in the throat, it means the noun "stockade;" and when spoken as if with a circumflex, as used by teachers of education in English, it means "to bethink."

In Annamitic, which is said to be a cognate* language, we find that, "*ba*, pronounced with a grave accent, means a lady, an ancestor; pronounced with a sharp accent, it means the favourite of a prince; pronounced with the semi-grave accent, it means what has been thrown away; pronounced with the grave circumflex, it means what has been left of a fruit after it has been squeezed out; pronounced with no accent, it means three; pronounced with the ascending or interrogative accent, it means a box on the ear; thus, ba, bà, bâ, bá, is said to mean, if properly pronounced, 'Three ladies gave a box on the ear to the favourite of the prince.'"†

In its tonic character, Karen "resembles the Chinese and Mōn-Anam languages. Its glossarial affinities, on the other hand, are very slight, with the Mōn-Anam tongues in general, and very numerous with the Tibetan Burman. With Mōn it has special affinities, evidently attributable to long contact."‡

* The Rev. J. Edkins, in his pamphlet on the *Miautsi* (or Miau-tsze), says, "The dialect of the *Miau* tribes proper, the oldest and most numerous, may be classed with the Annamese, Siamese, and Cambodian, with some of the Karen tribes."

† Max Muller, "Sci. of Lang.," second series, pp. 30, 31.

‡ Logan, "Journ. Ind. Arch.," vol. ii, No. 4.

The Chinese language has numerous intonations, and is said to be spoken in various dialects, some of which, like the *Pwo*, have final consonants, with nasal tones, and some like the *Sgan* and *Bwé*, whose words all end in vowels.

"It is, for instance," says Professor Max Muller,* "one of the most characteristic features of the literary Chinese, the dialect of Nankin, or the idiom of the Mandarins, that every syllable ends in a vowel either pure or nasal." And again, that "it is by no means certain whether the final consonants which have been pointed out in the vulgar dialects of Chinese, are to be considered as later additions, or whether they do not represent a more primitive state of the Chinese language." Quoting Léon de Rosuy's remarks on the language of Cochin China, he also records that "all words are monosyllabic, and people distinguish their significations only by means of different accents in pronouncing them. The same syllable, for instance *dai*, signifies twenty-three different things, according to the difference of accent, so that people never speak without singing;" and goes on to say, "this description, though somewhat exaggerated, is correct in the main, there being six or eight musical accents or modulations in this as in other monosyllabic tongues, by which the different meanings of one and the same monosyllabic root, are kept distinct. These accents form an element of language which we have lost, but which was most important during the primitive stages of human speech."

* Max Muller, "Science of Language," second series, pp. 29 and 188.

Eighty-eight common Karen words, selected by Dr. Mason to develope the affinities of the language, showed that sixteen words are allied to the *Tai*, that is Shan and Siamese, eleven to Chinese, ten to Burmese, three to Tibetan, three to Botian, three to Simboo, one to Indo-European, and one to each of the five North-Western tribes.

With our present knowledge, then, he argues that the affinities of the Karen language are strongest with Tai and Chinese, and when we know more of the Chinese languages as spoken in the south of China, he thinks that Karen will be found to be an off-shoot of Chinese.

Mr. Logan,* again, is of opinion, that the Karen dialects belong to the Yuma family, which "is one of the subdivisions of the Western or Tibetan branch of the Himalaic alliance, which was preceded in India and ultra-India by the Eastern Mōn Anam. The Himalaic formation is intermediate in its characters, structural and glossarial, between Chinese and Scythic; and as the existing languages of Tibet are pure Himalaic, and are conterminous with Scythic and Chinese, it is inferred that the cognate southern tongues are derived from the north of the Himalaya, that is from the ancient Tibetan province."

In the same paper, Mr. Logan remarks that the "ethnic relations of the Kaya (Red Karens), like those of other unlettered tribes, must be chiefly sought in the unconscious autograph of their language;" and he goes on to say, that "it is evident that the Kaya is a distinct and archaic dialect of the Yuma family. With Sgan, Pgho, and Toungthoo, it

* "Journ. Ind. Arch.," vol. ii, No. 4, of 1857.

may be considered as forming the Karen branch of that family." A branch in which the "Mōn-Anam influence has somewhat modified the proper Tibeto-Burman structure."

The Red Karen traditions, in reference to their association with the Chinese at Pagan, and to their being driven thence by the Burmese, as well as the Sgan legend as to the route by which they came into the country, have, by Mr. Logan's showing, the support of linguistic evidence. "Karen," he points out, "even in its Chinese characters, has a development so independent and peculiar, that it must have long preceded Burman in the middle and lower valley of the Irrawaddi. Toungthoo, in its vocabulary and phonology, is merely a dialect of Karen. The Yuma, Munipuri, and Naga dialects are so closely related to them glossarially as to show that, before they assumed their Chinoid form, they belonged mainly to this group, although their northern position gave them a Brahmaputran element also." An examination of the progress and course of the emasculated ultra-India dialects must," he adds, "begin with Karen." The highly monosyllabic, vocalic and tonic character of the Karen, he also appears to think, was caused by long and intimate connection with the Chinese, just as other attributes are the result of long contact with Mōn, although he by no means infers that it possesses radical affinities with either.

The peculiar character of the Karen language would, he says in conclusion, "be accounted for if they were the tribe that possessed the valleys of the Shue-ly (Showé-lee) when the Chinese pushed their

boundaries forward to the Irrawaddi," and as the town of Bhamó, immediately north of this valley, is mentioned in Karen traditions in connection with the Chinese, it is very probable that such was the case.

The Karen language was first reduced to writing in 1832 by Dr. Wade, who constructed an alphabet consisting of twenty-five consonants and nine vowels. The Sgan tribe was first met with, then the Pwo, and the missionaries, in making a philological comparison of their languages, noticed that although the roots in both dialects were substantially the same, there was a considerable difference in the languages themselves, so much so, as to induce indefatigable men to give their undivided attention to one or other of these dialects only, and act independently of each other. Thus, if we mistake not, the Roman alphabet was first adopted by those who made the Pwo dialect their special province, while the Burmese alphabet was used by the Sgan students.

Ultimately a modification of the Burmese character was fixed upon in preference to the former in both dialects, which, in spite of all that is said to the contrary, could, we venture to think, be easily adapted to all the requirements of Karen pronunciation, leaving out of the question the desirability of associating their written character with that of their present rulers, rather than with the ancient régime.

A grammar of the Sgan language with a vocabulary of the Pwo, intended for the use of European students, was published by Dr. Mason in 1846.

Another Sgan grammar, whose object was to aid the Karens in acquiring a correct knowledge of their own vernacular, was printed by Dr. Wade in 1861. Both are esteemed by competent judges as works of great merit, and highly creditable to their authors.

Dr. Wade, with a view of obtaining as much information about the people as possible, and at the same time fixing their language within definite limits and on a sound basis, compiled a kind of Karen Thesaurus, of four large octavo volumes, consisting of a repository of legends and traditions of various kinds in poetry and prose, and also of a lexicon or cyclopædia of words and phrases, and their different shades of meaning as given by the people.

Dr. Mason was, we believe, one of the chief contributors to this book. His name is further distinguished by his having been the first to publish a vernacular newspaper east of the Ganges. The Karen periodical, started by him at Tavay in 1842, is we believe still in existence.*

Their first book consisted of detached portions of the Gospel. These were followed up by religious tracts, as well as treatises on geography, trigonometry, history, arithmetic, &c., in the various dialects. The New Testament was translated into the Sgan dialect by Dr. Mason, assisted by other missionaries, in 1843, and the Old Testament was, we believe, completed by Dr. Mason without aid in 1853.

Regarding this grand work, a very competent judge has remarked that "he did not know of any

* See "Working Man's Life," p. 276.

other translation of the Bible that approached in all respects so near perfection as this one." *

In conclusion, we may say that there is abundant proof that the Karen language is sufficiently copious for all present requirements.

* Dr. Binney. See "Working Man's Life," p. 299.

CHAPTER IV.

EDUCATION.

THE words civilisation, education, religion, and many others, are among those expressions which are so often used without any clear, definite, or precise ideas being attached to them. Civilisation in its popular and ordinary signification suggests the idea of a community that is advancing cautiously and methodically, in promoting the best possible organization of society in view to the improvement of its social relations, and the furthering of its material progress. The term also seems to convey something of a more elevated and dignified character than the mere perfection of the social relations. In this other aspect of the word it embraces the intellectual and moral faculties of man; of his feelings, his tastes, and his ideas. Here we touch on the subject of education, which is the very soul of civilisation.

The question of education or civilisation is, we admit, one of degree as well as a matter of opinion. The civilisation of the West differs from the civilisation of the East.

To the typical *John Bull*, and to the typical Frenchman, all other nations are beyond the pale of civilisation, taking it in its widest sense; while to

to the "Celestial," all who do not belong to the "Flowery Land" are "Outer Barbarians." So it is with education.

With every desire to make due allowance for the Karens, it would not appear that their attainments when first encountered by the missionaries, was of a sufficiently elevated type to warrant our using the term civilisation or education even in their most limited popular sense in respect to it.

The term education then, whether interpreted in its generally accepted sense, or taken in its widest meaning, seems singularly inappropriate when applied to the intellectual, physical, or moral condition of the wilder clans of the Karens. When first encountered they were characterised by an ignorance the most deplorable, not only as regards intellectual culture, but also of the most simple arts. In some instances they evinced a savagery almost unparalleled, and bore a strong impress of the ethnic struggles of a bygone age, wherein, crushed, humiliated, and broken up by fiercer and more warlike tribes, they have incurred the inevitable penalty that such internecine strife inflicts on the weaker, and have evidently deteriorated as regards their physical, if not their moral education, compared with the time when, in a strong and apparently well organized array, they encountered the dread terrors of the Gobi and marched southwards.

They have traditions of having had the same opportunities as other peoples for acquiring knowledge, God having given them books when similar gifts were bestowed on the Burmese and Chinese, but they foolishly neglected to take advantage of

these opportunities, and lost their books as well as the little knowledge they had derived therefrom. The same obtuseness in reference to other matters seems, by some accounts, to have prevented them from taking their proper status among the nations of the earth, and, if truth be told, they seem to have voluntarily accepted the position, as one ordained by fate, and have never striven to be emancipated therefrom.

The Karens were first communicated with by means of the Burmese language, and so hopeful were the indications of the possibility of doing good among them that two missionaries, Doctors Mason and Wade, devoted themselves to the acquisition of the language. The names of both these gentlemen have for many years been prominent on account of the success of their exertions in raising the Karens, and deservedly hold a high place in the records of the progress of civilisation and education among this interesting people.

The Karens, like many nomadic tribes, had no written character till Dr. Wade reduced their language to writing; but in this respect they do not compare unfavourably with the most favoured nations, for from Mr. Crawford we learn "that no mere shepherd or nomadic people seems ever to have invented the act of writing, and we can readily believe that the nomadic state of society would afford no leisure or opportunity for such an invention." . . "But by far the most remarkable instance of a people who have failed to invent either symbolic or phonetic writing, is afforded by the races of Europe. No race from the Euxine to

the Atlantic, or from Greece to Scandinavia, has ever invented an alphabet." *

It had never struck the Karens that this language, like that of others, could be represented by signs, and when this was an accomplished fact, the effect on them was quite electrical.

Tottering old men and aged matrons, as well as youths and maidens, whose pleasures were hitherto aimless and profitless, if not absolutely vicious, vied with each other in endeavouring to acquire even a smattering of learning, so as to be able to spell over the little Christian tracts which were first printed in their mother tongue. Actuated by such a spirit, their progress in the art of reading was marvellous, and the first literary ventures of the missionaries in the Karen language—devoured with enthusiasm by thousands—were eminently successful.

The fact of possessing a written language of their own, stimulated, moreover, in the minds of this simple people an honest pride, that encouraged them in a measure to shake off the listless apathy that distinguished them, and to emerge from the "slough of despond" which appears to have drowned their dormant energies for centuries.

With such a feeling to work upon, the task of the missionaries was henceforth comparatively easy. Able and zealous assistants were found among the people, who, without pay or emolument of any kind, or other prospect of reward, save the satisfaction of doing good to their people, and the thought that their efforts towards promoting a national literature, put them more on a footing with civilised nations,

* "Trans. Eth. Soc. Lond.," v, p. 99.

entered on their duties with devotion. The mass of the people readily responded to their efforts, and encouraged their aspirations. The old folks, 'tis true, after the first novelty wore off, put away their spelling-books, and reverted to their chronic state of lethargic indolence; but the young people were still encouraged to persevere, and a great impetus was given to secular and religious education.

Whether, then, the Karens "shall or shall not become a civilised people," is, as remarked by Dr. Mason, "simply a question of whether they are or are not to have the necessary culture to make any uneducated people such."

Christian missionaries have nobly done their duty to solve this question in the affirmative, by establishing village schools all over the interior of the country; and by making the religious element the predominating influence therein, encourage a system of education which appeals so strongly and so effectively to the sympathies of the Buddhists, and has caused the elementary education which the Burmese can boast of, to compare favourably with that of the most civilised peoples in the world.

But while adopting this system so far as it goes, they essay to go far beyond it, and, taking "excelsior" as their motto, endeavour to develope the mental faculties of the Karens as much as possible by personally superintending the more advanced schools to be found at the principal towns in Burma. The Burmese, on the other hand, seem to have no ambition to extend their curriculum further than the standard required by their forefathers for many generations, and are not, perhaps, one whit more

advanced in this respect than they were one hundred years ago.

To the credit of the Karens it must be allowed that they early recognized the importance of encouraging women to qualify themselves to undertake their natural sphere as instructors of the young. Against good report and evil report, the champions of these liberal views have successfully combated the ancient prejudices of the people against bringing women forward in any way, and have not only convinced them of the advisability of sending their girls to school, but have also succeeded in having them regularly trained as school-teachers.

Many young women thus qualified have accomplished great results by exercising not only the beneficial influence that good and earnest women must have, but laying a foundation in the minds of their youthful pupils for future successful culture.

Not a few, too, endowed with great mental capacity and energy, have successfully vied with men in the higher branches of education; and though sneered at at first, have, by their perseverance and devotion, disarmed their opponents, who, in many instances, have appreciated their work as it deserves.

The bright and intelligent appearance of both boys and girls who have been influenced by education stands out in strong contrast with the apparently impracticable and stolid stupidity of the same class in their natural state of wild ignorance, and the high result of intellectual learning of which they are capable, is evinced by the very creditable know-

ledge displayed by the pupils in the various missionary schools, of astronomy, history, geography, arithmetic, mensuration, and of general subjects.

The students in the schools at head-quarter stations have succeeded in obtaining a most creditable standard as compared with those belonging to other nationalities, with the same advantages as they enjoy, and as the more important of these institutions have been subsidized by grants-in-aid from Government, their sphere of usefulness will, it is hoped, be much extended, and result in that practical benefit to education which has been so well earned by the exertions of the people themselves in furthering the good cause.

The uncivilised Karens are very deficient in works of art; and there are no monuments or relics of any kind, tending to prove that their education in this respect was formerly of a more advanced type than it is at present. Dr. Mason accounts for this from a desire on the part of the people that their localities should be unknown to the outside world. The women of most of the tribes weave a coarse and durable cloth, and embroider their garments very tastefully: but, in regard to some of those belonging to the more secluded clans, it is said, "they toil not, neither do they spin."

The people in the Tenasserim provinces make very neat baskets and tents.

The latter are woven in many fanciful patterns, to which they attribute (says Dr. Mason) a divine origin.

"When God was about to die, as the legend runs, he called all nations to him to receive his dying

legacies; but the Karens being tardy in coming, they arrived only in time to see his mats burning, and to note the figures on the ashes which had been woven into them; and they have made their mats, they say, after these patterns ever since."* The Karens manufacture a few rude musical instruments. The Bwés and Red Karens forge their own clumsy axes, hoes, and spears, and also make all the common silver ornaments worn by the women; while some of the tribes on the borders turn out very fair match-locks.

The Karens display no ingenuity in their works, as Dr. Mason says, have no particular tastes or bent of any kind; and what is inculcated into them would seem to be the result of mere drudgery. To this rule an exception may be made in favour of the decided talent they evince for music. Mr. Hordern, the Director of Public Instruction, when reporting on Mr. Carpenter's school at Bassein, remarked that "the capacity of the Karens for learning English music is remarkably shown here. Led by a Karen teacher, and reading easily from notes on a black board, they sang part songs in a way that would certainly astonish many an English church choir. The girls all play the harmonium."

Although the Karens originate nothing, they appear to be apt imitators, and to evince a decided capability for instruction to a high degree. Many who were dubbed *Loo-yine*,† or wild men, by the

* "J. A. S. B.," No. 34, pt. II, p. 129.

† One of these men, entirely taught by Dr. Mason, has passed a successful examination in arithmetic, land measuring, and law, and has been appointed an extra Assistant Commissioner.

Burmese, a few years ago, can survey land and plot it afterwards; while others can use the sextant, measure heights and distances, take the sun's meridian, altitude, and calculate the latitude.

They are fair carpenters, too, but not so good as the Burmese or the Chinese.

Quoting again from Mr. Hordern's report, we find that in the workshop, which was furnished with a lathe and other tools, he saw specimens of the pupils' work which was well turned out; the school desks and forms being creditable specimens of their handiwork. The Karens show a decided talent for the duties of a printing office, as evinced by the "Pali Grammar," "The Burmese Handbook of Medicine," and other works which have been published in Toungoo, under the auspices of Dr. Mason.

The production of the "Handbook of Medicine" elicited the following well-deserved criticism from Sir A. Phayre :—

"I had the great pleasure to receive two copies of your 'Burmese Handbook of Medicine.' I need hardly say how delighted I am to see this, knowing that if properly used, it is calculated to do a vast deal of good. It is beautifully printed, and I am really astonished that you have been able to bring the art to such perfection in Toungoo. This of itself is evidence of the great advance made by the Karens under your care."

We had also the pleasure of recording our appreciation of the work, at the same time, in the following terms :—

"The preface to your 'Burmese Handbook of Medicine,' is A COMPLETE SUCCESS IN THE ART OF

PRINTING, and is highly creditable to your Karen pupils.

"The printing is quite equal to that of the Journal of the Bengal Asiatic Society, with which I have compared it, and if your paper were better than it is, I am not sure whether it would not excel it.

"Success in teaching the Karens any of the useful arts, and thereby making them more useful members of society, will always be a matter of congratulation to every one who has their advancement at heart, and I heartily congratulate you on the results you have been able to show."

While, therefore, it must be admitted that the wilder tribes are stupid in an ignorance of the most debased type, those that, within the period of even a single generation, have been emancipated from this thraldom, afford an instance of what can be done by well-considered and persistent efforts for promoting and encouraging education.

CHAPTER V.

GOVERNMENT.

THE use and necessity of government are such, that it is said there never was an age or country without some sort of civil authority, but as men are seldom unanimous in the means of attaining their ends, their differences in opinion as to what constitutes good government have produced many forms of it.

Thus we have the monarchical, republican, and despotic governments, with their different offshoots.

The independent or quasi-independent tribes of Karens afford an instance of a people who practically set at nought the axiom of political economy with which we preface this chapter; for what Mr. O'Riley records of the Red Karens, may be reasonably applied to most of the other tribes. "They possess neither law nor dominant authority," and the only semblance of the latter which "exists among them, is that of the chief, or head of the tribe or community, who is regarded simply as the patriarch, but whose power for good or evil is nominal."

Their traditions refer to a time when they were an undivided nation with a king of their own; and some of their present aspirations point to a monarchical government in course of time, under which they anticipate great temporal prosperity; these hopes

even take the shape of prayer to the Almighty in the following strain :—

"O Lord, we have had affliction for a long succession of generations; have compassion, have mercy upon us, O Lord. The Talaing Kings have had their season, the Birman Kings have had their season, the Siamese Kings have had their season; and the Foreign Kings have all had their season; the Karen nation remain. Let our King arrive, O Lord. Thou, O Lord, whom we adore, to whom we sing praises, let us dwell within the great town, the high city, the golden palace. Give to us, have compassion upon us, O Lord.—Let us have Kings, and let the city, the town, the great town, the Silver city, the new town, the new city, the palace, the royal residence, arrive to us all, O Lord."*

The milennium, that they are sanguine enough to hope for consequent on the rule of their monarchs, is pourtrayed in the following stanzas :—

"When the Karen King arrives,
There will be only one monarch;
When the Karen King comes,
There will be neither rich nor poor."

"When the Karen King arrives,
The beasts will be happy,
When the Karens have a King,
Lions and leopards will lose their savageness."†

In spite of these prayers and aspirations, there is no record that the Karens ever strove, or any evidence that they intend to strive for the practical fulfilment of their hopes; in fact, they seem recon-

* Dr. Macgowan, "Journ. Ind. Arch.," vol. v, No. 6.
† Ibid.

ciled to the isolation and state of dependence which has been their lot for ages.

It is generally accepted as an universal fact, that whereas a number of individuals have assembled on the face of the earth, they have adopted certain rules for their mutual guidance. Now, though we do not say that these tribes form an exception to the rule which proves that the association of men is not accidental, but an inherent attribute of human nature; and though we can also make allowances for the diversity of circumstances which necessitate a revolution of the ideas as to what constitutes government in more advanced nations, still the state of affairs among them would seem to belie the facts, borne out by history and by general experience, that the political and social economy of the human race must be worked out by combined effort, and not by the desultory and isolated action of independent individuals.

Government.—Although the term government may be too comprehensive when applied to the polity that obtains among the wilder clans, yet they possess an oral law for the regulation of society almost as cumbrous as the written law of more civilised peoples.

With no tradition of a Lycurgus, they imagine that their law came down to them in a state of perfection from the Ancients, and consequently like that of the Medes and Persians it altereth not.

Of this unwritten or common law, as we would term it, the elders of each tribe are the recognised interpreters, just as the secretaries of state of European Powers are the official interpreters of

royal warrants. These elders* are expected to teach the young people to do good and to eschew evil, and it must be said in their favour, that in their jealous care and reverence for ancient traditions, they honestly and consistently endeavour to hand down the maxims they have received intact, although it must be confessed that many of those whom they strive to teach, having no restraint on their passions, save that of superstition,† and the fear of retaliation, acknowledge no right of control, and taking the law into their own hands, apply it as it suits their savage inclination.

According to Karen law, each family is encouraged to avenge its own wrongs, and provided aggrieved persons, in proceeding to extremities that involve the loss of life or liberty of their enemies, or otherwise taking the law into their own hands, conform to the customs as handed down from the ancients, which have acquired the force of law, they are held to have acted in conformity with strict procedure. Having practically no court of law to which they can appeal, the people constitute themselves "judge, jury, and executive," and as all offences against the person, however heinous, are commutable by fine, the compensation demanded by those who consider themselves injured in any way, is often of the most arbitrary description. The consequence is,

* It was thus with our own ancesters, for Hume, talking of the ancient Caledonians, says "the bands of government, which were naturally loose among that rude and turbulent people, were happily corroborated by the terrors of their superstition."

† "A village," says Dr. Mason, "without an elder would be like a parish in England without a clergyman." "J. A. S. B.," vol. xxxvii, part ii, p. 131.

that defaulters have to comply with these extortionate requisitions by equivalent payment in kind or money, become the bonded slaves of those who have claims against them, or give occasion to the latter to assume the functions of sheriffs' officers by the system of forays in retaliation for wrongs both civil and criminal, which is in accordance with their unwritten civil and criminal codes combined. This anomalous state of affairs, although fairly representing the normal conditions of the social relations that exist among the more savage tribes, is subject to considerable modification where the people have been directly or indirectly influenced by civilised nations, or where their chiefs, either by a combination of fortuitous circumstances, such as possessing more property than their neighbours, commanding a wider family connection; inheriting a prestige won by their ancestors, or by sheer force of character, acquire and exercise an influence, which in the case of other so-called chiefs, is simply nominal.

"The government of the Karens,"* says Dr. Mason, "may be compared to that of the American Indians at present, or to that of the Scottish clans in the days of Rob Roy. As a whole they are ungoverned and ungovernable." "Each village, with its scant domain, is an independent state, and every chief a prince; but, now and then, a little Napoleon arises, who subdues a kingdom to himself, and builds up an empire. The dynasty, however, lasts only with the controlling mind."

The chieftainship is usually hereditary in the family of the chief, but it is often elective, when the

* "J. A. S. B.," xxxvii, part ii.

person who aspires to this honour has not obtained the tacit or declared suffrages of the people.

Under the most favourable circumstances however, the chief can only be regarded as the patriarch, and occasionally the High Priest of his tribe. He is also, in conjunction with the elders, the recognised referee in the settlement of disputes, and in the arrangements necessary for the adjudication of real or fancied wrongs. But, in cases where his interests and those of his people are identical, or where he has the power to punish the refractory, his influence is sufficient to enable him to raise levies to attack his enemies, or to plunder his weaker neighbours, and sometimes even extends to the powers of life and death. Thus, in ancient Caledonia, although the chief had great power with his clan in the different relations of landlord, leader, and judge, his authority was far from absolute, as he was obliged to consult the leading men of the clan in matters of importance.*

Nevertheless, as a general rule, the chiefs are unable to extend towards their nominal subjects that protection which an organized form of government affords, or even to insist on the payment of taxes, which they might legitimately demand for such protection.

It is true that contributions in the shape of articles forming the necessities of life, are sometimes offered by the people to their chiefs on the occasion of national or other festivals, and in honour of domestic occurrences; as well as to assist him in carrying out the hospitality which he, as representa-

* "History of the Highlands and Highland Clans," p. 128.

tive of the tribes, is expected to afford; or perhaps they may be intended to provide for the "sinews of war" for a foray; still, with the exception of the people of Eastern Karennee, none of the clans are regularly assessed by their chiefs.

Sawlapaw Chief of Eastern Karennee has alone succeeded in enforcing this recognition of his sovereignty, by levying a capitation tax; and supported by the influence of the Burmese Court* to which he is tributary, has used his powers to convince the tribes in his vicinity that union is strength, and that an alliance offensive and defensive with himself as recognised ruler, is conducive to their mutual advantage. As a rule, however, the division of the people into tribes and clans, as was the case with the ancient Caledonians, engenders a spirit of reciprocal hostility, which prevents any political union or amalgamation of their common interests, and it is only when a foreign foe threatens their existence, that a sense of danger forces them to unite for a time under the command of a chief enjoying the greatest prestige.

The Chief of Western Karennee, it is true, receives contributions from the neighbouring villages, on the occasion of a great annual gathering that takes place in his village; but it would appear that these may be considered more in the light of offer-

* Dr. Mason remarks, "Bad as the Burmese government is, the Karens that have been subjected to it, are more thrifty, more civilised in every respect, and live more comfortably than those who have ever maintained their independence, which goes to prove that a bad government is better for a people than no government." "J. A. S. B.," vol. xxxvii, part ii, p. 151.

ings to their High Priest, than as tribute to their ruler. On this occasion, the chief, with considerable ceremony, uncovers and brings forth the ivory and metallic tablets (mentioned in another chapter) and presides at the sacrifices and oblations in their honour. The people who have a superstitious reverence for these plates, "feed" them with money or its equivalent, which is recognised as the perquisite of the chief. Other chiefs of lesser note levy a sort of black-mail from those weaker than themselves, as the price of exemption from attack, but these desultory extortions can hardly be held in the light of legitimate tribute.

In the case of those tribes which have not been influenced by the Christian religion, or by the advantages of our rule, a feeling of insecurity exists, and every male is constantly armed for the purpose of offence or defence; and this is true, not only as regards isolated clans and small communities, but also holds good in the case of the people of Karennee, who have long lost their nomadic habits and are settled residents in a country with a considerable population. Superstition too, as was the case with the Scottish highlanders, adds its influence in exasperating animosities by teaching the clansmen, that to revenge the death of a relation or friend is a sacrifice agreeable to their shades: thus engaging on the side of most implacable hatred and the darkest vengeance, the most amiable and domestic of our feelings—reverence for the memory of the dead, and affection for the virtues of the living.*

The people of Western Karennee, fully alive to

* "Hist. of the Highlands," p. 133.

these evils, and aware of the advantages that a good government affords, have for many years yearned to submit themselves to our rule, but, unfortunately for the people, our policy precludes the possibility of acceding to their wishes.

We can only hope that the efforts of Christian missionaries, which have already been appreciated by them and borne good fruit, may be as successful as has been the case with other tribes; for in reference to them as well as to those clans in which civilization has made no progress, we may reasonably conclude in the words of O'Riley, and say that "if it be an axiom that all civil governments are based on religion, not until their present impure faith has given place to a more enlightened one, will any improvement in their social condition be effected by their own voluntary agency."

CHAPTER VI.

ORIGIN.

ALTHOUGH the historical traditions of rude and unlettered tribes have seldom much ethnological value; the traditions of the Karens in reference to their origin and older movements, have the support of linguistic evidence not accorded to the elaborate histories of the more civilised nations that surround them. And when we compare these with their physical and mental characteristics, state of social relations, system of government, manners and customs, and religious and mythological observances, we are involuntarily reminded of that "well-marked civilisation characterised by a common morality, and by distinctive social, domestic, and religious institutions and practices,"* whose original seat, geographical, concurs with linguistic evidence in assigning to middle Asia.

Deeply imbued with those superstitious observances that were the science and religion of the primitive Asian civilisation, the Karens recognise, in common with the ancient tribes of Central Asia, an immaterial and imperishable spirit in men.

They believe with them, that spiritual power over health and life, extending even to the realms of

* Logan, "Journ. Ind. Arch."

the dead, is obtainable by the living, and wizards and necromancers are both respected and dreaded. The practice of sorcery, divination, and ordeals, as is the case with other Tibeto-Burman tribes, is universally practised, and deeply influences life, "by holding it in an atmosphere of distrust, dread, and revenge. A complex and burdensome system of taboo is the necessary result of the fear in which spirits, especially those of man, are held." Offerings to the manes of deceased ancestors hold almost as prominent a part in the Karen ritual as in that of the Chinese. The Karen believes that all objects, natural and artificial, have their presiding deities which have to be appeased or kept in good humour, or that the soul, or Là, has the power of leaving the body during sleep, causing sickness even unto death, if too long absent, and their habit of propitiating the ghosts of the dead by the consecration of miniature houses to their use, in which boiled rice, plantains, and other food are put, is among the Lythic and other branches of the Archaic Asiatic faith. Their religion is precisely the same as the Naturalism and Shamanism of the Tartars, in that besides the recognition of spirits and spiritual influence over the affairs of this world, the idea of a supreme God has been attained—"the Maker of all things visible and invisible, and the Distributor of good and evil in this world; but they worship Him not with prayer or praises, or any kind of service."*

The custom adopted by the Karens of placing in and upon the graves of the dead articles adapted for the use and consumption of the living, concealing

* Yule's "Marco Polo," i, 225, &c.

the burial places of their chiefs as practised by the Red Karens, the binding of slaves and ponies near the graves of the dead in lieu of the obsolete custom of human sacrifices at the funerals of influential persons, their feasts and oblations in honour of the spirits of the dead, are essentially similar to those observed by the tribes in Central Asia and in China.

Their divination by fowls' bones, as we have noticed in another chapter, is precisely the same as the practices observed by the Miau-tsze* or hill tribes of China, who Mr. Lockhart† believes possess strong marks of similarity of origin with the Karens of Burmah; and although the Karen method, in its entirety, does not obtain with any other peoples we have read of, we have hazarded the conjecture that the Tartar divination by twigs, and the Chinese method of tossing in the air two symmetrical pieces of wood‡ may be the same. Augury, according to Mr. Logan, is a general practice among the Himalaic tribes. "The Goras and the Miri consult the entrails and especially the livers of the sacrificed offerings. The Augami have recourse to eggs."

* The *Miau-tsze* are found in the provinces of Kweichau, Yunan, Sechuen, Húnán, Kwang-si, and the western part of Kwang-tung. "In the Imperial dictionary of Kanghi, the sign 苗 miau (a compound of the words 'flower' and 'meadow') signifies 'germinating seeds,' 'blades of grass springing from the seed vessels.' The sign 子, tsz, on the other hand, is that usually employed to express son or descendant. In accordance with this explanation, the Chinese also seem to consider the Miau-tsze as children of the soil, or indigenous inhabitants of the country." "Voyage of the *Novara*."

† "Trans. Ethn. Soc. London," i, p. 182.

‡ Yule's "Marco Polo," i, 214.

Their social system under which each village or group of villages is a little republic, under a hereditary chief or patriarch, obtains, as a general rule, among all the tribes of the Himalaic family. For it does not appear that the latter, before crossing the snows on their way from the central plateau, had ever attained to a condition of society favourable to the growth of monarchy; and this fatality towards disintegration and isolation seems to have followed them into the sunnier South, except in the cases of the few that have become nations, and aided in undertaking a *rôle* foreign to their natural predilections and antecedents. The great mass of the *Tai* race afford a prominent instance of a Himalaic tribe preserving the ancient form, although familiar with kingly rule. With the wilder clans, as with the Tibetan tribes, humanity has made little or no progress. Selfishness reigns supreme, blunting natural affection even for their kindred, and producing indifference to human suffering and bloodshed. Tribe feuds, lasting for many generations, with their usual concomitants of rapine and murder, are the normal condition of their society. The sexual relations have received no refinement, and strength alone being respected, the strong are free to indulge in their savage inclinations to their fullest bent.

Marco Polo, talking of the natural beverage of the Tartars, says, "Their drink is mare's milk, prepared in such a way that you would take it for white wine, and a right good drink it is, called by them *Kamiz*."* In like manner the Karens have a

* Yule's "Marco Polo," i, 224.

national beverage, prepared from rice or millet, called *Khoung*.

It would appear that the intoxicating power of both "varies according to the brew," and in regard to both it may also be said that they are "the drink of all, from the suckling upwards, the solace of old age and illness, and the greatest of treats to all." * Above all things, it is said the Tartars "eschew drinking plain waters," and as for the Red Karens, "water rarely touches the surface of their bodies by their own voluntary intention, and as rarely, in its pure state, passes into them." †

From Mr. Logan we learn that the personal ornamentation of the Karens "follows the ordinary Himalaic and Indonesian fashion, in which heavy tiers of rings on the arms and legs, and sometimes on the waist, with enormously distended ear-perforations are conspicuous." ‡ The long house in which a whole community dwells is decidedly Himalaic. To sum up. The Tibeto-Burmans, to which family Mr. Logan allots the Karens, "where least modified by Indian and modern Chinese influences, preserve all the traits of the ancient race and civilisation of Upper and Eastern Asia.

"They are Turanian and Mongolic in person only. Their native usages are of Archaic Mid-Asian origin, like those of the Tartar hordes and of the Chinese themselves.

"In remote ages the Mid-Asian usages received

* Yule's "Marco Polo," i, 227, &c. Vambery's "Travels in Central Asia," p. 151, n.

† Riley, "Journ. Ind. Arch.," vol. iii, part i.

‡ "Journ. Ind. Arch.," vol. ii, No. 4.

modifications in the Lythic, the Himalaic, and the Chinese families, and the later civilisations of the Tartars and the Chinese, especially of the latter have greatly masked them."*

The religious traditions of the Karens, which we have noticed in another chapter, unmistakeably point, it is said, to an ancient connection with the Jews or Nestorians, whose policy and exploits form a prominent feature in the history of Central Asia. Dr. Macgowan in reference to this subject remarks that their "religious dogmas cannot be referred to a Christian, Mahommedan, or Pagan source, they were derived neither from the New Testament, the Koran, or the Vedas; they are manifesty Hebraic.

"The question here presents itself, are the Karens descendants of the Jews, or was it in consequence of intercourse with Jews that they became possessed of so many scriptural truths? The solution of this question is, perhaps, impracticable, but facts connected with it are of peculiar value to the science of ethnography."†

Dr. Mason, in some of his earlier publications, was inclined to think that the Karens were of the Hebrew descent; and although subsequent experience seems to have caused him to modify his first impressions, yet from a perusal of his latest work we are somewhat in doubt as to whether he adheres to his original assumption, in its entirety, or leaves it an open question as suggested by Dr. Macgowan.

In this, he says,‡—"Since some of their traditions

* "Journ. Ind. Arch.," vol. ii, No. 4.

† Ibid., vol. v, No. 6.

‡ "Wroking Man's Life," p. 277.

are so definite and truthful, they must have been derived directly from the Bible; and, as they contain nothing peculiarly Christian, they could not have come from persons aquainted with the New Testament, they are Old Testament traditions, so that we are shut up to the conclusion that they come from the Jews. Their Jewish origin was first doubted when I first propounded the theory, but I think it is very generally accepted now. The Chinese missionaries, who are the best situated to judge of the probabilities of the case, very generally adopt my views, and by their own researches concerning the existence of Jews in China, have added to the evidence." Mr. Knowlton remarks in the *Missionary Magazine* for September, 1857, "We have discovered evidence of the existence of a Jewish colony in Chingtu, not far from Lushau, nor yet from the original seat of the Karens, a century before our era. Now, as the Jews of Chingtu seem to have disappeared about the period when the Huns were expelled from China, we are of opinion that they fled to the mountains, and if they are not the progenitors of the Karens, the latter are at least indebted to them for their remarkable scriptural traditions." While we agree with Dr. Macgowan,* in thinking that the coincidence pointed out by Dr. Mason, admitting them to be nothing else, are highly suggestive, still the absence of those physical and moral characteristics, which, wherever they may be found, unmistakeably stamp the lineal descendants of Abraham, speak volumes against admitting the Karens among the "chosen people," although the alternative hypothesis, in

* "Journ. Ind. Arch.," vol. v, No. 6.

reference to their religious traditions, undoubtedly carries weight.

With every respect for those early writers, who held that the Karens were of Caucasian origin, we cannot help thinking that more experience would have taught them to alter their opinions on the ethnical peculiarities of this people. Dr. Macgowan argues that "the absence of the rite of circumcision and their use of swine's flesh, does not strongly militate against the hypothesis of the Jewish origin of the Karens. The Jews in China (who appear to have come hither in the century before our era) have found the rite and prohibition to be extremely burdensome, and so much condemned by the Chinese, that they seem quite willing to discard them altogether. Now, if the Karens form any portion of that body of Israelites, which was carried to the interior of Asia B.C. 772, or of those of Judah taken into captivity subsequently, it is not strange that they should have lost all trace of such custom, their circumstances being peculiarly unfavourable to their observance."*

In the opinion of some ethnologists, the evidence of language (which appears to be the strongest point in the elucidation of the origin of the Karens) is irrefragable, and it is the only evidence worth listening to; with regard to ante-historical periods, others say that "language, although yielding valuable evidence of the history and migrations of man, affords no sure test of the race he belongs to."

One school looking back into the obscurity of primeval dawn, from the evidence of language alone,

* "Journ. Ind. Arch.," vol. v, No. 6.

and without apparently a vestige of history to warrant its deductions, readily accept the Aryan theory, which assumes that a tawny race residing in a temperate clime, *trans Oxus* in some unaccountable way, broke up into two huge waves, one of which, passing over the snows of the Himalaya, broke over the sultry regions of Hindustan and became black men, while another wave, drifting in a western direction, permeated the whole of Europe and became a white people.

The opposite school avers that history has no example of any deep or permanent change, affected in the human race from the earliest times; and taking as it were for their text, "Can the Ethiopian change his skin?" contend that the diversities of type and complexion cannot be accounted for, from the effects of climate, food, or manner of life.

Even taking for granted, however, that in phonetic character, and in some words, there exist that resemblance between the Chinese and Karen languages, that is characteristic of the affinities which philologists perceive between some of the languages of Europe and those of the northern portions of Hindustan; we are not, we confess, prepared to extend the principles of the Aryan theory, as regards the Chinese and Karens, although we think we should have as good grounds for arriving at this conclusion as those who maintain, from the testimony of language, that the swarthy Hindu and the fair Englishman are of one and the same stock. Although a similarity exists in the structure and sound of the numerous monosyllabic tongues, belonging to distinct races of men, which inhabit the countries

between the Bay of Bengal and the Sea of Japan; still these very languages, according to Mr. Crawfurd, afford a very thorough refutation of the above theory.

"If language were a test of race," he also remarks, "we should be tracing some of the negroes, settled in America, first to England and then to Germany and Italy."

No such startling hypothesis obtrudes itself when hazarding the suggestion that the Karens come from Central Asia, as their physical and moral characteristics, their traditions, and their customs (which are perhaps less subject to change than language) harmonize with linguistic evidence in support of this idea.

Mr. Logan in his paper on the ethnographic position of the Karens,* prefaces his remarks, in reference to the deductions to be made from the investigation of their language, in elucidation of his subject, by saying that "the most satisfactory evidence of the older movements and relations of rude tribes is to be found in their language."

He refers the Karen to the Yuma family, which belongs to the Western or Tibetan branch of the Himalaic alliance; the southern dialects of which appear to him "simply less modified dialects of the same group with Karen, that is, they preserve the same form that Karen itself had when they separated from it, and preceded it in the spread of the group to the southward. Karen remained in the north till a later period and has a large admixture of the same Brāmāfrūtran glossary that is the principal ingredient

* "Journ. Ind. Arch.," new series, vol. ii, No. 4.

in Burman." Arguing on the fact of the approximation of Karen to Chinese, Mr. Logan is also of opinion, that it is probable the Karens were, at one time, the dominant tribe in the valley of the Irrawaddy, and that they occupied the position the Burmans now hold.

The peculiar character of the Karens, he goes on to say, which indicates that the people were in contact with the Chinese and Lau on the one side, and with the Naga-Manipūri and Yuma tribes on the other, would be accounted for on the supposition that the people possessed the Showé Lee Valley when the Chinese pressed forward to the Irrawaddy. This supposition is borne out by the traditions of the Karens, which prove that they once occupied the country in the vicinity of Bhamò.

The western and southern movement of the Karens, he further urges "which brought them after the language had been modified by the Chinese, into contact with the Naga-Manipūri tribes, and with the Mon, was probably the consequence of one of those determined, but unsuccessful revolts against the authority of the conquerors of Yunan, or Yun-nan, of which the Chinese annals speak." He also rejects the idea that the Chinese element in Karen was derived through Burman, by referring to the Chinese vocables which it has acquired.

Dr. Anderson arguing on the ethnological phenomena observable in the Showé Lee Valley at the present time, appears inclined to put little faith in deductions based merely on a philological review of the affinities of language, and doubtless his remarks carry more weight in reference to the contact between

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the Burmese and Shan race, than if he carried the same analogy to the credit of the isolated and exclusive Karens. "As far north as Bhamò," he says,* which was once a Shan principality, and in which there are few, if any Burmese, the language of the latter people has largely taken the place of Shan, and is understood by the majority. "This conversion of the Shans of the Irrawaddy into a Burmese speaking population has been brought about in three and a quarter centuries, and there can be little doubt that the process of assimilation, which was commenced so long ago, is in full activity, and it may be that another century will find the Shans knowing only of their own tongue through their chronicles, and in the course of other and following years, these may one by one disappear, and the only remaining trace of the language may be the impress it may have made on the Burmese tongue. Facts like these indicate that no sound system of ethnology can be reared on any other foundation than that of history as the interpreter of the facts of philology, and of the modifications of physical form induced by the blending of races.

"The study of the changes at present going on in the languages of two peoples, such as those of the Shans and Burmese of the Irrawaddy Valley, and the accurate regarding of the effects of intermarriage, and the crossing and re-crossing of the two tribes, might ultimately result in our being able to cull, from the mass of facts, certain persistent phenomena, which might be proved by further observation to be of universal occurrence under similar conditions.

* "Expedition to Western Yurinān," pp. 96, 97.

They would be of two kinds, philological and anatomical, but as it is not the study of an isolated organ, or part of the body that will yield the result that would be necessary to place the anatomical wall of the temple of ethnological science, on a secure basis, no more would the results of the simple comparison of vocabularies be accepted by the philosophical philologist, as a foundation on which to rear the superstructure of his system of knowledge."

Leaving generalities aside, we cannot help thinking that in our present imperfect knowledge of the languages with which Karen is supposed to bear affinity, and in spite of what Mr. Logan so learnedly says, it would be impossible, from the evidence of language alone, to come to any satisfactory conclusion on the subject of the origin of the Karens. The Karen tradition of their origin, at least of the routes by which they arrived at their present seat, are, on the authority of Sir A. Phayre,* more trustworthy than those of the Burmese or the Talaing regarding themselves, and are in harmony with this view, for from the Sgans in lat. 11 N., to the Gaykhos in lat. 19·50 N., all the tribes, more or less, are impressed with a vague idea of having come from the north. Thust legends that take more tangible shape among some of their communities by indicating a most intimate connection with the Chinese in former times,

* Phayre's "History of the Burmah Race." "J. A. S. B."

† "The north was also the seat of the solar and lunar races, the scene of chivalrous adventures, and the abode of all those who were celebrated in the legends, the mythology, and the philosophy of the Hindoos."—Mowliman's "Hist. of Ind.," i, 3.

or by referring to places of which the narrators know nothing but the bare names.

Thus, Bhamò or Bhauman, a town on the Irrawaddy, 135 miles from Mousiew or Téugyevé, the frontier city of Yunan, frequently occurs in old Bwé poetry, as the name of a large Burmese city, near which their ancestors formerly dwelt, one of the songs saying—

> "Go buy a large cleaver in Bhauman,
> Return buy a large axe in Bhauman."

An old myth also represents Ywa or God, when about to die, sending for the Burmese and Karens to receive dying gifts, after which they returned to Bhamò.* Another instance of their northern origin is adduced from the fact of Karens, from the far north, having revealed to their southern brethren words in their language which, from disuse, had been wholly forgotten, or explained the meaning of others which, though in existence, were no longer in common use.

The Sgans at Tavoy, as well as the Red Karens, have a legend in reference to their first connection with the Chinese, and noteworthy only as such, the pith of which we have been unable to discover, unless it be intended to point a moral, like the egg of Columbus.

From this it appears that the Chinese and Karens, when travelling together, secured a quantity of shell fish (cytheria). The Karens hearing that they were good to eat, boiled them and, without more ado, essayed to eat them, but they found that

* Mason's "Burmah," p. 831.

the more they boiled them the harder they grew, so they gave up the attempt in despair, and it was only on ascertaining that their brethren, the Chinese, broke the shells first that they found out how easy it was to accomplish this object. In the traditions of both these tribes we find, also, that the Karens formed part of a Chinese expedition into Burmah, but were left behind by their allies on account of their sluggish movements, and built themselves cities and villages where this separation took place. Some accounts indicate the locality as identical with Ava, others with Pagan*; the discrepancy, however, is of little importance, for both give one the impression that they intended to convey the idea that the Karens settled near the then capital of the Burmese empire, and in giving it a local habitation and a name, in good faith, mentioned the most ancient Burmese capital of which they had any knowledge. And, if we look at the matter by the light of contemporaneous history, the balance of evidence is in favour of Pagan, which no doubt was the metropolis of Burma, when the Chinese overran the country. No mention appears to have been made of the Karens, either in the Chinese records, relating to the invasion of Burma, or in the Burmese chronicle of the same event. This silence is, however, by no means conclusive against the authenticity of the Karen tradition.

Indeed, the latter is strengthened, if not verified, by a remarkable coincidence between the name of the city where the king's palace was located with that of the Burmese capital, when the Chinese visited the country.

* Pagan or Pagham.

The Karens call their city *Hotaylay*, or the "gold and silver city," which we may not unreasonably assume to be identical with the city of *Mien* with its "gold and silver towers," mentioned by Marco Polo."* The term *Showaymys*, or "golden city," is to the present day, applied to the city honoured as the king's residence. No baser metal than gold is now alluded to when describing any of the attributes of Burmese royalty, and it is certainly remarkable that the ancient name of the capital, as given by that prince of travellers, should be verified from so humble a source. The Red Karen tradition admits that the Chinese, though weary of the company of their brothers the Karens, dealt honourably by them, as regards their share of the patrimonial inheritance. This consisted, among other things, of a book composed of metallic or ivory plates, which has been reverently kept ever since by successive chiefs of Western Karennee.

The Sgan version relates how in ancient times there were seven† brothers, whose parents divided a bamboo bucket into seven pieces, and giving a piece to each, told them that they would become the

* Yule's "Marco Polo," vol. i, p. 76, n.

† In the Gaykho tradition of the creation and the flood, both of which events are somewhat confusedly mixed up in the narrative as we received it, the inhabitants of the earth are divided into seven families.

Dr. Hunter, referring to the analogies that exist between the Mosaic and the Sanscrit accounts of the creation, notices a coincidence that is to be found in the number of children born to the first pair, and remarks that "as the Santol legend immediately divides the human species into seven families, so the Sanskrit tradition assigns the propagation of our race after the flood to seven Rishis."—"Annals of Rural Bengal," 151.

representatives of different peoples and clans, and after having been estranged from each other for a season, would eventually come together again, and living in peace and friendship, would bring with them their portions of the bucket, and restore the latter to its original shape.

Some of the people are fully impressed with the belief that this is symbolical of the fact of their becoming hereafter a great and undivided nation, and in anticipation of this event, they repeat stanzas the substance of which is given in the following doggrel :—

> "Down the Roy country they come, they come,
> To measure the bucket they run, they run,
> The people of Roy now here we have,
> So put up the bucket with every stave."

The *Sgan* tradition goes on to say that the Karens stayed with the Chinese as long as they could. The latter separated themselves from them, however, and when the Karens in seeking them, found that a plantain tree, which the Chinese had cut down, had grown up again, they came to the conclusion that it was useless to follow them.

They have preserved this tradition in a couplet, of which the following is a free translation :—

> The Cytheria spiral shell,
> Elder brother Pakū, boiled them well,
> Red Alisma, younger brother,
> Red Alisma from his centre popped,
> White Alisma, younger brother slew,
> Up from her centre White Alisma grew.

Many of the wild tribes of the Deccan and other parts of India are supposed to be typical representa-

tives of the various communities in whose vicinity they dwell, before the latter were modified by Hindu civilization, and, by all accounts, their physical characteristics, as well as other traits, are sufficiently in accord with those of their reputed descendants to warrant the assumption.

Distinct as the Karens are in aspect, form, and bearing, as well as in their social characteristics, from the Burmese, Talaings, Shans, and other races in Burmah, one would imagine that this theory would not be adopted in regard to them by the most casual observer. Still, Colonel Low, in writing about them, says:—"In the Indo or Hindoo Chinese countries, with few exceptions, inspection will convince us that, wherever such wild tribes exist, their external conformation and bearing, if not their language and habits, bear an analogy more or less strong to the same characteristics displayed by the more civilised nations or tribes which have supplanted them in their ancient rights."*

Some years ago it was very generally supposed that the Karens were the aborigines of Burma. There is, however, a considerable difference of opinion on this point at present. The Rev. Mr. Cross argues in favour of the supposition we have advanced. Dr. Mason† opposes it, by distinctly asserting that it is quite certain the Karens are not the aboriginal inhabitants of Burma; while Colonel Yule and Sir Arthur Phayre incidentally support Dr. Mason's opinion, by giving the weight of their authority in favour the *Mon* or *Talaing* people.

* "Journ. Ind. Arch.," vol. iv, No. 8.

† Mason's "Burmah," p. 71.

Colonel Yule, speaking of the Indo-Chinese tribes that have descended from beyond the Himalaya, assigns their order of migration as follows :—1st, *Malays;* 2nd, *Chams;* 3rd, *Mōns* or *Talaings;* 4th, *Khmer* or *Kambojans;* and 5th, the *Anam.* The Shans may have succeeded the latter tribes, he thinks, the *Karens* "probably followed. Then we have the *Maramas* or Burman race apparently descending the Irrawaddi, pressing before them the *Mōns* into the Delta, the Khyens and like tribes into the bordering mountains."*

While Sir A. Phayre says :—"Among the earlier emigrants from that part (great central plateau) of Asia towards the south, as far as we can now discover, were the ancestors of the present *Mōn* or *Talaing* people, the *aborigines*, so to speak, of Pegu."†

Mr. Cross refers to a tradition preserved by the Mons, who, he thinks, are manifestly a more ancient people in Further India than the Burmans, which he is of opinion shows that the Karens were already in possession of the country to the east of the Bay of Bengal, when they themselves made their first appearance, in their southern progress, as far as the Promontory of Martaban.

After quoting Dr. Mason, to the effect that when Godama visited Thatone several centuries before the Christian era, he found the Talaings occupying the country, surrounded by barbarous people styled Beloo, the Burmese equivalent for wild man, he goes on to say "that the Beloos were Karens may be

* "Brit. Ass. Advan. of Science," 181.

† "Trans. Eth. Soc., London.," vol. v, p. 32.

inferred from the fact, that the island* south of Martaban, was found to be almost exclusively inhabited by Karens." But does not this prove too much? for when Buddhist missionaries visited Arakan, in which Karens in any numbers have never been located; the inhabitants were dubbed *Rek-Khaik* or Ogres, the exact equivalent in Palè to the *Beloo* of the Burmese. "Even in the polished age in which the Ramayan and the Mahabbarat were composed, the south was the land of fable, the dwelling of bears and monkeys, and it was not till a very late period, that these apes, and goblins, and monsters were transformed into orthodox Hindoos."†

Dr. Mason and Mr. Cross adduce in favour of the position they have taken, very interesting Karen traditions.

Mr. Cross says,‡ "one of their ancient traditions distinctly gives their location on the eastern side of a body of water, which they called *Kaw* or *Kho*. The present inhabitants have lost the meaning of these words, and the so-called body of water has become a mystery to them, so ancient is the tradition which refers to it. Yet the tradition when examined carries with it its own explanation; Kaw, according to our ancestors, is a river or body of water to the west. They represent the *buceros* or hornbills, as migrating across it in seven days—as soon as the rainy season begins, the hornbills migrate to the other side of the Kaw, to the country where it is a dry season, which is a seven days' journey.

* *Beloogyoon*, or Ogre Island.

† Marshman's "Hist. of India," i, 3.

‡ "Journ. Oriental Americ. Society," W, pp. 296, 298.

"They there lay their eggs and raise their young—again when the dry season returns here, it is wet season on the opposite side, and the hornbills return across the Kaw to this side, and after a journey of seven days arrive again in this country.

"Again *Kho-lo* or *Kaw-lo*, the river Kho or Kaw, is a compound—of the meaning of this expression, or to what river or body of water it refers, we are now ignorant.

"It is preserved in tradition that it is an immense body of water, the largest in the world, lying in the west, and that it runs back towards its source. This tradition and one or two others, which refer to the same body or bodies of water, plainly indicate the Bay of Bengal. The difficulty appears to be in applying the word *lo*, which is now used for a stream, to a body of water so large as the Bay of Bengal. But it sometimes refers to the ocean, and need not be wholly restricted to a river. It is a fact that the rainy and dry season exactly conform to the tradition. The wet season begins on the western side when it ends on the eastern, and *vice versâ*; and perhaps the habits of the hornbills conform, for we do not remember to have seen them on the eastern coast during the rainy season. From this tradition we infer that, from a period very remote, the Karens have occupied the country which they now occupy on the eastern side of the Bay of Bengal. A marked circumstance, which fixes the Bay of Bengal as the Kaw of antiquity, is that it reverts or runs towards what is naturally taken to be its source, a strong current sets to the north from Achen-head, or the upper end of the island of Sumatra, and passes

the Nicobar islands. This would be taken by the inhabitants of the eastern shore of the bay, as a running back to its source, since all the rivers of the Burmese empire run directly to the south, and opposite to this current, which is evidence of the bay. This body of water is said, in tradition, to be the largest in the world, showing that at some remote period the Karens had either crossed it, or had been familiar with those who had; as is also indicated in the tradition of the migration of birds, and the peculiarities of alternate wet and dry seasons.

"No other body of water can answer to this description, and it is evident no larger body of water had ever been seen by them within the reach of their tradition. We may conclude, therefore, that the eastern shore of the Bay of Bengal has been their habitation from time immemorial, and perhaps before the Talaing, the Burman, or the Siamese Empire was in existence."

But that they did not first form as a nation, or race, far to the north of the provinces of South-Eastern Burmah, we would not pretend to affirm. Exceptions may, we think, be taken against Mr. Cross's very ingenious theory. In the first place the peculiarity in reference to the current he speaks of is true as regards a portion of the year only, and there is nothing in the antecedents of the Karens to warrant the supposition that they have ever been a seafaring people, or so interested in the affairs of those that "go down to the sea in ships," as to hand down by oral agency a fact which ordinary landsmen would hardly think worthy of notice. Still, against this idea may be argued that Ceylon occurs in Karen

tradition under the name of Sale, identical with the Salæ (Simundus) of Ptolemy.*

Apropos of this subject we quote Sir Arthur Phayre,† who says: "The country in which Europeans first came in contact with the Karens (those on the sea coast) has only lately been occupied by them, but the mountain country between the Salwen and Sittang rivers has probably been theirs for ages."

Other reasons adduced by Mr. Cross, which he considers may be given in favour of the idea that the Karens are the aborigines of at least the south eastern provinces of Burma, are :—Firstly, the Burmese believe they are so; secondly, the name *Karen* ‡ means *first* or *aboriginal*; thirdly, the people bear out the character of aborigines, owing to their simple and primitive habits, and in their relationship to the dominant races. Dr. Mason, § on the other hand, quotes a tradition in proof of the Karens having emigrated from China and settled in the Shan States, on their way to their present seat, some centuries after the Christian era, and long after the Burmese and Talaings had occupied Burma.

They showed him the precise spots they had fled to in the days of Alompra, and told him that the cities in their forests were in ruins when they first arrived in the country from the North, and that they were then independent of the Burmese,

* Dr. Mason's "Working Man's Life," p. 307.

† "Trans. Eth. Soc., London," v, p. 32.

‡ See remarks on the etymology of the word Karen.

§ "Burmah," pp. 71 and 72.

Siamese, and Talaings. When asked about the time of their dispersion they were silent. "The fact was clearly before them, but the retrospect was too obscure to determine the distance."

Far in the dim horizon was the river of "running sand"* which their ancestors, led by a chieftain of miraculous power, had crossed before coming—a fearful trackless region, where the sands rolled before the wind like the waves of the sea. This description evidently refers to the dread terrors of the Gobi, so graphically described by Marco Polo as well as by Fahian. "In this desert" says the latter, "there are a great many evil demons, there are also sirocco winds, which kill all who encounter them. There are no birds or beasts to be seen; but so far as the eye can reach the route is marked out by the bleached bones of men who have perished in the attempts to cross the desert." †

To what this river of running sand referred was inexplicable to Dr. Mason till he read the journal of Fahian, a Chinese Buddhist pilgrim, who visited India in the early part of the fifth century, and who

* The very remarkable expression "river of running sand" used in Laidlay's "Fahian" does not occur in Beal's more recent translation of the travels of this celebrated Chinese pilgrim, although in his "Mission of Sung Yun" the "drifting sands" are referred to. In the Reg-Rewan or "Flowing Sand," north of Kabul, we have another instance tending to prove that under certain circumstances connected with the disturbance of the sands in the trackless desert of Central Asia phenomena occur which explain the apparent anomaly. Beal's "Travels of Buddhist Pilgrims," p. 176.—Laidlay's "Fahian," p. 6, note.—Yule's "Marco Polo," i, p. 183, note.

† Beal's "Travels of Buddhist Pilgrims," p. 3.

thus designated the great desert between China and Tibet.*

"This emigration," Dr. Mason goes on to say, "occurred about the time the Shans settled in Labong and Zimmay, because the tradition represents the chieftain to have come over first with an exploring party, and that they selected the region about Labong and Zimmay as their future home; but when he returned with his nation he found it occupied by the Shans. On this the Karens cursed the Shans, saying, 'Dwell ye in the dividing of countries,' the applicability of which, as suggested by Colonel Yule, is shown by the fatal want of coherence, which has split the race into a great number of unconnected principalities, many of which are incorporated in the Chinese province of Yunan, and others tributory to Burma and Siam." The story of coming to Zimmay, as Sir Arthur Phayre justly points out, "must be accepted as the modern version of the fact, that about Zimmay they were stopped in their progress south along the watershed range between the Salwen and Menm rivers by the previous occupation of the Shan race."†

Taking for granted the correctness of Shan history (as recorded by Dr. Richardson) which states that *Labong*, the oldest of these cities, was

* The desert of the Great Gobi is "intersected from west to east by a depressed valley, aptly named Shamo, or the '*Sea of Sand*,' which is also mixed with salt—west from it lies the Hau Hai, the '*Dry Sea*,' a barren plain of shifting sand blown into high ridges."—"Journ. Ind. Arch.," vol. iv, No. 8.

† "Trans. Eth. Soc.," v, 33.

built in A.D. 574, Dr. Mason argues "that this emigration of the Karens may have occurred some centuries after the commencement of the Christian era." As above shown, Mr. Cross has endeavoured to prove that the Karens are, and Dr. Mason that they are not, the aborigines of Burma.

Leaving this question à moot point, it is evident that the Karens, in common with other Indo-Chinese races belong to that family of nations commonly described as of Tartar origin, which, during the decline of the Roman Empire, began permanently to forsake the great plateau in Central Asia in search of more fertile regions, and rushing impetuously over China, Persia, and all Central Asia, established for a time the most formidable empire known in the world's history, whose terror and fame under the appellation of Huns, the ancestors of the present race of Mongols, extended to the frontiers of Italy; who, under the famous Timour, founded a dynasty in India which formed the most splendid court in Asia till the end of the eighteenth century, and whose Eastern hordes, known as Manchau Tartars, established the present reigning house in China. "And if" (says Mr. O'Riley)* "the doctrine of distinct races of men, and their physiognomical peculiarities be taken as a medium of identification, then the almost perfect Esquimaux features and shape of head which prevails generally, but in some of the wilder tribes more especially, mark them as the descendants of the ancient Tartar hordes, as we read, swept from

* "Journ. Ind. Arch.," vol. vii, part i.

their inhospitable steppes, across the region of Central Asia, far into the plains of Hindustan, whence they have been subsequently dispersed into the more inaccessible mountain systems of the Himalaya and its subordinate ranges.

CHAPTER VII.

Religion, Mythology, Folklore, &c.

In those Archaic Mid-Asian Mythologies, traces of which have been preserved more or less intact by the Karens, there was a genuineness reminding us of the broad simplicity that characterised the gallant and hardy old Norsemen in their searches after truth. The vast and solitary grandeur of the Gobi inspired the one just as the inhospitable regions of the North, with their "snow jokuls, roaring geysers, sulphur pools, and horrid volcanic chasms, like the waste chaotic battle field of frost and fire," inspired the other.

The primary characteristic of the Asiatic as well as the Scandinavian beliefs seems to have been an "earnest simple recognition of the workings of nature as a thing wholly miraculous, stupendous, and divine. What we lecture on as a science they wondered at and fell down in awe before as religion." "To these primeval men," says Carlisle, "all things and everything they saw exist beside them were an emblem of the God-like—of some God. And look what perennial fibre of truth was in that. To us also, through every star, through every blade of grass, is not a God made visible if we will open our minds and eyes? We do not worship in that way

now, but is it not reckoned still a merit proof of what we call a 'poetic nature' that we recognise how every object has a divine beauty in it?" Nature was to the first rude peoples that began to think "what to the thinker and prophet it for ever is, *preter*natural." "The world, which is now divine only to the gifted, was then divine to whomsoever would turn his eyes upon it. He stood before it face to face."

As with the Scandinavians, so with the Mid-Asian peoples, bewildering and inextricable as their ideas may appear to us, their religion was a great reality. To account for it as the trickeries of mere quackery or priestcraft, or attribute it to the shadowing forth by allegorical fable the visionary ideas of poets, does not, as Carlisle so forcibly points out, meet the question. Let us try, as he says, whether "we cannot ascertain as much at least, that there was a kind of fact at the heart of them, that they too were not mendacious and distracted, but in their own poor way true and sane."

Besides the evidence of the common origin of archaic religious ideas, we learn from the analogies in the Egyptian, Indian, Greek, and other systems, that Mythology had advanced to a certain point before the early migrations took place from Central Asia.*

In the earliest ages of the Hindu religion, as taught in the Vedas, dating possibly 1400 years before our era, the "leading doctrine is the unity of God; and the various divinities, the personification of the elements, whom the devotee is required to

* Rawlinson's "Herodotus," ii, 250.

invoke, are manifestations of the Supreme Being." "In that early age, indeed, there appears to have been no images, and no visible types of worship." From what we can gather from the songs of the Rig Veda, it would appear that the religion of the Aryans consisted in the worship of the different phenomena of nature. The early Hindus then, although not idolatrous in the sense of image worshippers, were decidedly polytheistic, their chief gods being Indra, Varuna, Agni, the Sun, the Dawn, the Winds, the Earth, the Waters, &c.

In the "Institutions of Munoo," published about five hundred years afterwards, the worship of the elements, of the heavenly bodies, and of inferior deities, is inculcated; but, though idols are noticed, the adoration of them is discountenanced.

The worship enjoined by Munoo was succeeded by that of Brahma, which was almost, if not altogether spiritual. Then came the deification of heroes, with which the popular system of idolatry may be said to have commenced.*

Thus the Hindus and many other nations of the East for a long time retained the worship of the true and only God.† At length, however, idolatry broke in, and like an impetuous torrent overwhelmed them, carrying away in its eddies the vestiges of their purer faith.

* See Marshman's "Hist. of India," vol. i, p. 6.

† The same original belief in one God may be observed in Greek mythology; and this accordance of early traditions agrees with the Indian notion that "truth was originally deposited with men, but gradually slumbered and was forgotten, the knowledge of it however returning like a recollection." Rawlinson's "Herodotus," ii, 249.

The Karens, judging by their traditions, seem, like the Hindus, as well as the Chinese and Egyptians, to have long retained and practised the Noachic religion, in which "fable and fancy could find no place, and all was genuine unsophisticated truth;" but though now they appear to depreciate the efficiency of such service, they cannot be said to have degenerated into idolaters.

They are apparently distinguished from the peoples that surround them by their belief in the existence of a Supreme Being, God eternal, the creator of heaven and earth and of all things, for, in one of their religious traditions, we have the following stanzas:—

"God is unchangeable, eternal,
He was in the beginning of the world;
God is endless and eternal,
He existed in the beginning of the world;
God is truly unchangeable and eternal,
He existed in ancient time, at the beginning of the world;
The life of God is endless;
A succession of worlds does not measure His existence,
Two successions of worlds do not measure His existence.
God is perfect in every meritorious attribute,
And dies not in succession on succession of worlds."

In ancient times, they say, God associated with them, and kept them under His special protection; but, in punishment for their disobedience and grievous backslidings, He withdrew His favour from them (after endeavouring in vain to lead them to Himself), and has since betaken Himself to the "seventh heavens."

Like the unclean spirits in Holy Writ, who recognised the majesty of the Lord Most High, the

Karens believe in the omnipotence of Jehovah, but also seem to say, "What have we to do with Thee?"

Occasionally, when sickness or other dire calamity overtakes them, they cry to God in their distress, but it is "*to the unknown God*," referred to by Saint Paul, to whom the Athenians raised an altar, that their supplications go forth. A cry, indicative of the pent-up and despairing yearnings of unregenerate human nature, endeavouring to throw itself on the protection of something better and stronger and wiser, when all subordinate agency, which it has been taught to revere and to depend upon, has failed.

Every object of nature, say the Karens, has its lord, thus all bodies celestial as well as terrestrial, every human being, nay, all animate things, as well as things inanimate, which can be brought into practical use, have their guardian spirits. The air they breath, too, is thickly peopled with the ghosts of the unburied dead, and the spirits of their departed ancestors crowd round them. They have the god of the sun, the god of the moon, and the god of the earth. The mighty ocean, the trackless desert, the lofty mountain, the wide river, or the yearning chasm which, from the natural awe they inspire, demand reverence; the spreading banyan tree, the rice field, the vegetable garden or the hill clearing, which minister to their wants, have each and all their tutelar deities, which, as subordinate beings to some greater power, must be propitiated.* The Greeks too, besides the

* Thus the Negroes in Africa, according to Park, believed that the concerns of the world are committed by the Almighty to the superintendence of subordinate spirits.—Brand's "Popular Mis.," i, p. 199.

greater gods, gave a presiding spirit to almost every part of visible nature: trees of various kinds had their dryads, hama-dryads, and other nymphs; rivers, lakes, marshes, and wells had their naiads, as plains, mountains, caves, and the like had their presiding spirits; and each "genius loci" of later times varied with the place.*

These spirits, which we call demons, are "demons only in the signification the Greeks used the word,"† for they are not naturally aggressive; unluckily, however, mortals are apt to trespass inadvertently on their domains, and are punished for such breaches of etiquette with sickness or death. To avert these calamities, they must be appeased with offerings of food, and sacrifices are made in their honour of buffaloes, oxen, swine, fowls, and dogs, the worst parts of which are left for the deity, and the rest eaten by the devotees.

With the Karens, as with the natives of Central Asia, "the earth and its interior, as well as the encompassing atmosphere, are filled with spiritual beings, which organise and influence, partly beneficent, partly malignant, on the whole of organic and inorganic nature. . . . . Especially are deserts or other wild and uninhabited tracts, or regions in which the influences of nature are displayed on a gigantic or terrible scale, regarded as the chief abode or rendezvous of spirits. . . . . And hence the steppes of Turan, and in particular the great sandy desert of Gobi, have been looked on as

* Rawlinson's "Herodotus," ii, p. 250.

† Mason's "Burmah," p. 103.

the dwelling-place of malignant beings, from days of hoar antiquity."*

The Burmese, although strict Buddhists, and indeed carrying out the tenets of their religion, perhaps more strictly than any other nation, privately as well as publicly indulge in the worship of spirits or *nats*, which are supposed to be endowed with bodies of such subtle nature as to be able to convey themselves at pleasure, with the utmost rapidity, from their seats in the upper heavens to that of man, and *vice versâ*. These are the good genii.

Other nats, again, who have been banished from their blissful abodes, on account of misconduct, and doomed to drag on a wretched existence in gloomy recesses, vent their spite on mortals by bringing down all sorts of calamities on their heads. In Buddhist lore, the exertions of good and beneficent nats, in causing virtue to triumph over vice, are always a prominent feature; we also find examples of the malpractices of wicked nats, who seem to take a pleasure in ministering to the evil passions of men. "A good deal of the worship of Buddhists consists in superstitious ceremonies and offerings made for propitiating the good nats and obtaining favours and temporal blessings from the good ones. All kinds of misfortunes are attributed to the malignant interference of the evil nats. In cases of severe illness, that have resisted the skill of native medical art, the physician gravely tells the patient and his relatives that it is useless any longer to have recourse to medicines, but a conjuror must be sent for, to drive out the malignant spirit who is the author

* Yule's "Marco Polo," i, 182, n.

of the complaint. "A shed having been built and offerings deposited therein to appease the inimical nat, a female relative of the patient is set dancing, to the sound of musical instruments. The dance goes on—at first in rather a quiet manner, but it gradually becomes more animated, until it reaches the acme of animal frenzy." At this juncture the conjuror steps in, and on ascertaining from the "medium" that the invisible foe has disappeared, hands over the patient again to the doctor, assuring him that his remedies will now act beneficially, since their action will not be opposed by the wicked nat.

Bishop Bigandet, after long experience of a country where Buddhism has prevailed from time immemorial, and having observed the effect of superstition on the minds of the people, is of opinion that there is scarcely an action done without the influence of some superstitious motive or consideration.*

According to Burmese notions, there are two distinct bodies or systems of the creatures called *nats*. The one is a regularly constituted company, of which *Tragya Meng*, or Indra, is the chief, unknown to the Burmese till they became Buddhists. These are the real Dewah or Dewata. The others are the creatures of the indigenous system existing among, and constituting the only worship of, all the wild tribes bordering Burma, which the Burmese acknowledged and worshipped before they were converted to Buddhism.†

* See Bishop Bigandet's "Legend of the Burmese Buddha," pp. 17, 45, 71, and 72, notes.

† See note by Sir Arthur Phayre to Bigandet's "Life of Gaudama," p. 537.

Karen mythology proper, may, we think, be confined strictly to the latter system, for although their elders teach that those who have performed meritorious works go to a place of happiness above, corresponding with the Deva heavens of the Buddhists; those who have sinned who sent to the regions of torment, while those who have not acquired merit, or whose crimes are of but neutral tint, are allotted a place in Hades, still these views, which are at best, confused and contradictory, are evidently grafted on the indigenous system whose ritual of observances simply enjoins the necessity of sacrifice and oblation, either to avoid calamity or to obtain blessings in this life, without admitting that the good or the bad actions of its votaries meet with reward or punishment in the world to come.

The unconverted Karens have therefore, strictly speaking, no religion, like other peoples, who though they worship idols, endeavour by sacrifices and offerings to procure benefits in a future state.

Strong as is their faith in spirits, and absurd as are many of the legends they tolerate about God, the Karens as a race abstain from the worship of idols, although among the Bwés, a kind of fetichism prevails, in that they have stones in their houses, that they suppose possess miraculous power, and which seem to represent the household gods of the ancients.* Some of these are supposed to be the habitat of malignant beings, while others are much prized because they are believed to be animated by benevolent spirits. Doubtless, however, these shapeless symbols, like the stones in the temples of the

* Mason, "J. A. S. B."

Todas on the Nilgheri hills, are merely representations of an unseen power, and not in themselves actual objects of worship; though with other races preserving less strictly their primitive character, this original use has degenerated into idolatry.*

Like all other nations in a state of ignorance, Karens believe in elfs, fairies, brownies, witches and wizards; in necromancy, soothsaying and augury, and are particularly distinguished for their quaint conceits with reference to a certain attribute of all animated nature, as well as implements useful for man, which the Pwos call *La*, the Bwés *Lai*, the Sgans *Kala*, or *Kelah*, and the Red Karens *Yo*.

La, which Dr. Mason defines to be the personification of the life or efficiency of a person or thing, resembles, he says, the Psyche of the Greeks as well as the Genius of the Latins, possessing at the same time many attributes peculiar to itself.

The Burmese, as he also points out, have somewhat similar ideas regarding a guardian spirit, calling it *Leipya*, or butterfly.

Although, therefore, these peoples have a conception analagous to one of the most beautiful conceits in Grecian mythology, there is nothing in their religious beliefs to warrant the presumption that they share the ideas of some writers in reference to the allegory in connection with Psyche representing the union between the Divine love and the soul.

"This *La*," they say, "existed before man was born, comes into the world with him, remains with him until death, lives after death, and for ought

* Colonel Ross King's "Aboriginal Tribes of the Nilgheri Hills," p. 22.

that appears to the contrary, is immortal. Yet no moral qualities are predicated of it. It is neither good nor bad, but is merely that which gives life to mortality." After death, the "*La* and the man himself—the ego—are said to be distinct; yet in all the representations of the future state the man seems to be absorbed in the *La*."*

This is somewhat inconsistent with their idea that the *La* may be separated from the person to whom it belongs during life; for the *La*, whose proper place is on the head or neck of the person it protects, sometimes leaves him while he is asleep and wanders away to the ends of earth.†

The primary import of the name is, says Mr. Cross, *pure*, unmixed, clear or transparent. *La* or *Kelah*, would, he adds, signify *life* or *existence*, and its primary meaning is retained. Life or existence in the abstract is personified. It is considered as independent of the organization of the body, and as entering it to dwell there and leaving it at will. As bare existence, it is the individuality or general idea of an inanimate object. It is also the individuality of the animated being. It, in fact, personates the varied phenomena of life.

The *Kelah* is not regarded as the responsible agent in human action. The good and bad actions

* Dr. Mason, "J. A. S. B."

† Among the old Northmen there is a superstition which they call *Lamfarir*, wherein the soul is supposed to leave the body of a sleeping person occasionally, and to wander under other forms into distant places and countries. We have also read an anecdote of a Lincolnshire man who believed that the soul of his sleeping comrade had temporarily taken up its abode in a bee.—"Notes and Queries," vol. ii, p. 506, and vol. iii, p. 206.

of the individual in this sense of the *Kelah* are not attributed to its influence. An extract from a native's remarks upon it, will shew the distinction made between the soul or responsible agent and the Kelah: "When we sin, or commit any offence, it is the *thah*, soul, which sins; and again when we perform any good action, it is the *thah*. Praiseworthiness or blameworthiness is attributed to the *thah* alone. By some the *Kelah* is represented as the inner man, and with the others the inner man is the *thah*. When the eyes are shut and in sleep the reflective organs are awake and active. This is sometimes attributed to the *Kelah*. Hence the *Kelah* is the author of dreams." The Karens say that the *Kelah* is not the soul, and yet although distinct from the body its absence therefrom results in death.

According to the representations of some authorities the guardian *La* on departure from the body of a man leaves him to the tender mercies of seven other malignant *Las*, that are constantly devising his death, and are only prevented from destroying him by its presence.*

It is, therefore, a matter of great moment for a Karen to be on good terms with his *La*, and he accordingly pays great attention to it, makes it offerings of food, and uses many devices to secure its presence and good will, believing that if he does not keep it in good humour it will cease to protect

* This idea is paralleled by the mythological tales recorded in classic literature, for we find that the Egyptians believed that every man had three angels attending him; the Pythagoreans that every man had two; the Romans that there was a good and evil genius.

him from his bad demons, or the *Las* of madness, epilepsy, lechery, wrath, bad dreams, diseases, and languor; which though seven, are seven in one.

The guardian spirit on the head of a man Mr. Cross calls *Tso*, which he defines by the word *power*. "A probable explanation of the *Kelah* and the *Tso*, taken together, is the following. The *Kelah* signifies that part of human nature that pertains to life—the sentient soul, or the animal spirit, the feelings, and particularly the passions, which, in fact, are continually tending in the present condition of our nature to evil and to destruction. This part of our nature, being observed, is accounted for on the supposition of in-dwelling personalities, which, though distinct and dissimilar, are nevertheless united into one, constituting one whole class of faculties, or the whole of the sentient soul. High above this, and in its own proper seat, is *reason*, or the *Tso*, the true power of the man, which, until dethroned or enfeebled, so orders the whole as to protect it from injury, and so guides as to protect from ill. But this system, not recognising any higher system than reason, all failures are attributed to its defects or its absence."

The Karens believe that, under certain circumstances, they have power to detain the spirits of the dying and even of the dead. This idea is somewhat similar to the superstition prevalent in Lancashire and other parts of England to the effect that "a person cannot die in the arms of one who strongly desires to retain the parting soul," as well as to the Dutch custom of shading a dying child by a curtain from the parents' sight, lest the loving glance should

detain the parting spirit, and prolong the death struggle.*

Dr. Mason gives the following story in his "Mythology" of the Karens. A man's wife died when he was absent on a journey, and when he was returning he met her *La.* Believing it to be his wife in the flesh, he spoke to the *La,* which conversed with him, telling him she was on her way to visit her parents. As they had far to go, they agreed to spend the night at the place they met, and in the morning they separated to pursue their several journeys.

"When the husband got back to his house, he found his wife dead, and his children and neighbours preparing for the funeral. Then the truth rushed on his mind, and he said, 'Children, I met your mother last evening on the road, and we spent the night together; she was going on a visit, but alas! it was her *La.* Had I known it I would have called her back.' "†

In Scottish mythology there are traditions of mortals having obtained a release from fairy land through the exertions of their friends. Ethert Brand, or as the Karens would have it, Ethert Brand's *La,* was released by the intrepidity of his sister, as related by Sir Walter Scott in the "Lady of the Lake."

> "She crossed him thrice, that lady bold:
> He rose beneath her hand,
> The fairest knight on Scottish mould,
> Her brother Ethert Brand."

* "Notes and Queries," 3rd series, pp. 88 and 235.

† "J. A. S. B.," Dr. Mason, xxxiv, part ii, p. 199.

The *Kelah* is more apt, they say, to forsake feeble persons and children. Hence, when corpses are carried by, in removing them from the house children are tied to a particular part of the house with a particular kind of string, lest their *Kelahs* should leave them, and pass into the corpse which is passing. The children are kept tied in this way till the corpse is carried completely out of sight.

Dr. Mason, quoting a *Sgan* authority, says, "The *La* before it comes into the world, becoming a material body, promises God that it will die by one of seven ways. These are—in the mouth of a tiger, by disease, by drowning, by the hand of man, by a fall, by a blow, or of old age, and carries out its promise invariably."

Although, therefore, Karen physiology is somewhat confused on the subject of these mysterious beings, it is extremely interesting as representing the crude ideas of savage men feeling after the truth.

Karen ideas, in reference to the future, are somewhat like those held by the Greeks and Romans.

The spirits of the dead resolve themselves apparently into four classes.

The first consists of the *Plupho*, or inhabitants of Hades. They are the shades of those who have died natural deaths, and have been decently buried. "They go to their proper country, and renew their earthly employments. As the North American Indian, with his dog and bow, seeks food in the beautiful hunting-ground of the world of the departed, so the Karen, with his axe and cleaver, may

build his house, cut his rice, and conduct his affairs after death as before."*

The second are the *Sekhahs*, or ghosts of infants, or of persons who from accident have not been buried, and debarred thereby from entering Hades, wander about the earth, and occasionally show themselves to men. These ghosts are supposed to be harmless, and are consequently not propitiated with offerings.

The third are the shades of those who have died violent deaths, and are known as *Therets*. These vampires are supposed to seize the *Las* of men, causing mortal disease. Hence they must be appeased by offerings to induce them to free the *Las* they have seized. The Kakhyens have a similar superstition in regard to ghosts of this kind, which they call *Munla*. They have the power of entering into people, and of acquainting them of events that may be happening similar to those by which they met their death.†

The fourth, known as *Tah-mus* and *Tah-kas*, are the spectres of wicked men, of tyrants, of unjust rulers, and of those who have expiated their crimes by an ignominious death at the hands of justice. These also remain on earth, and torment the *Las* of men.

"After they leave the body, they appear in the form of horses, elephants and dogs, crocodiles and serpents, vultures and ducks; and this, not in the way of metampsychosis, but as the immediate choice of the spirit at the time, and simply for apparition."‡

* Mr. Cross, "J. A. O. S.," iv, p. 313.

† Anderson's "Expedition to Yunan."

‡ "J. A. S. B.," vol. iv, p. 313.

Varied offerings, says Dr. Mason, are made to this last class of ghosts. In one kind, after the usual oblation of food has been set out, the sick person whose *La* is supposed to have been seized is sprinkled with charcoal, and prayers are offered to the ghost, to induce it to desist from its wicked purpose.

Wicked men and murderers are supposed to be able to raise ghosts, and harass their enemies by the simple process of securing of a human skull, and keeping it by them.*

MYTHOLOGY.

Worship of Ancestors.—The propitiation of the manes of deceased ancestors by libations of khoung or whiskey; and sacrifices of animals, is a distinctive feature in Karen mythology, and as we have remarked in our chapter on Origin, unmistakeably points to contact with Mongolian peoples. It is also in accord with the practices of the ancient Romans, which possibly may have originated from the same source, interesting evidence of which may be traced in their historical records, as well as from inscriptions on stones and funeral urns, frequently found in their old burial places, both in England and elsewhere, with the letters D.M.S.; that is, *Dis Manibus Sacrum*—sacred to the manes gods. There is, however, this difference apparently between the Mongolian and Roman mythologies compared with the Karen, inasmuch as with the former, all their departed ancestors appear to be sacred, irrespective of the lives they led in this world, whereas with the

* Dr. Mason, "J. A. S. B.," vol. xxxiv, part ii, p. 203.

Karens, only those who have performed meritorious deeds, are considered worthy of being deified as the spirits, who are supposed to preside over births and marriages, and to exercise a watchful care over them.

Dr. Mason says, "There are different classes of worshippers or sects, as they may be denominated, who make different kinds of offerings, one set of worshippers offers only rice and vegetables, another offers fowls, another hogs, and another oxen or buffaloes. Those who sacrifice animals, sometimes offer all three as different rites, but those who offer rice and vegetables never offer sacrifices.

"These different rites are hereditary in different families of the same or of different tribes. Those whose ancestors offered bloodless offerings, offer bloodless offerings; and those whose progenitors sacrificed animals, sacrifice animals."*

The Bwé custom differs from the Sgan, in that women are the officiating priestesses; men being strictly tabooed from taking any part in the ceremony.

When offering sacrifices to the manes, or in the exercise of other of their superstitious rites, the Karens invariably remain in their houses, and are usually impracticable as regards ordinary sublunary affairs, as officers of government, who may require their presence, and to whom time may be an object only know too well.

The *Mukhahs*, as the beings to which we refer are sometimes called, are supposed, says Mr. Cross, to be the creators of the present generation of men, and offerings are made to them rather to appease them than from any supposed obligation. For

* "J. A. S. B.," vol. xxxiv, part ii, p. 205.

though they are in the main good, they are not wholly devoid of that vampirism which runs through all the classes of mythological beings which have anything to do with men.

The halt, the maimed, the blind, or other imperfect specimens of humanity, are said by some to be the handiwork of the king of *Mukhahs*, who having so much to do, has either no opportunity or lacks inclination to become a finished workman, while the lovely and perfectly shaped, are the results of the more elaborate care and attention, which his subjects bestow on their creation.

Others interpret the state of affairs in the Mukhah country in a more complimentary sense towards its ruler, reminding one somewhat of Burns' famous lines—

> "Her 'prentice han' she tried on man,
> An' then she made the lasses, O!"

A chapter on mythology would hardly be complete without some allusion to fairies.

Fairies.—Fairies, according to the mythology of western nations, are supposed to be a kind of intermediate beings, partaking of the nature both of men and of spirits, with material bodies which they have the power of making invisible, and of passing through any sort of enclosures. They were also thought to be remarkably small and of *fair* complexion, hence the English name say some authorities.* But this etymology, as well as the name of Brownies for the domestic sprites with swarthy complexions, seems doubtful.

* See Brand's "Pop. Antiq.," ii, 477.

Both are said to possess all the passions and wants of human beings, and to be great lovers of cleanliness and propriety although the Karens have good and bad fairies. There is nothing apparently in their mythology exactly corresponding with the creative fancies of Shakespeare, when he gives to

> "These airy nothings
> A local habitation and a name."

Besides these terrestrial fairies, however, there are quasi-infernal sprites which dwell in the mines and are kind to the work-people, which are somewhat similar to the good-natured spirits among the Karens.

Ceres or Goddess of the Harvest.—"Among the sprites of nature," says Mr. Cross, "and one of the most benevolent, is *Pheebee Yau*, or Ceres, who sits in her place on a lonely stump the live-long day, to watch the growing corn and the ripening ear. Her object is to fill the granaries of the frugal and industrious with rice, and she is a great favourite among the people."

Dr. Mason refers to this personage as "Grandmother *Bie-yau*,"* and it would appear from the accounts given him, that she was originally a serpent and is now a widow. "Offerings are made to her in a little house built for her residence, in which two strings are put for her to bind the *La* of any one that may enter into the field."

Spirit-rapping.—It is interesting to notice that "spirit-rapping" has long continued to exercise a fascination among the Karens, somewhat similar to

* "J. A. S. B.," vol. xxxiv, part ii, p. 216.

the popular interest it excited in England, France, America, and other western countries some years ago. They have not, it is true, arrived at "table-turning," but, possibly the science may acquire this development when their archaic fashion of squatting on the floor, has been supplemented by the introduction of the more modern inventions that constitute the furniture of "hat wearing" nations. Spiritualism retains a very strong hold even on those converted to Christianity, and the missionaries confess it is one of the most impracticable of the illusions with which they have to grapple. Their method of calling back the *La*, or spirit of a deceased person, "illustrates," says Mr. Cross, "a curious fact of electricity manifestly connected with some striking phenomena which now seem to be recognised in this country,"* and possibly will be accepted as a convincing proof that "there is something in it," by those who believe in the efficacy of the innocent diversions to which we allude. The ceremony has been so well described by Dr. Mason, that we cannot do better than quote what he says:—

At the Sgan funerals, the presence of the *La* is said to be manifested thus. One end of a slender erect bamboo is attached to the bone of the deceased that has been taken from the funeral pyre. A small thread with alternate tufts of cotton and bits of charcoal, with a metal ring, or bangle, at the extremity is tied to the other end, which makes the bamboo bend down in a curve; and under the bangle, nearly touching it, is a brass bason containing a boiled egg.

* "J. A. O. S.," iv.

The closing ceremony of the bone feast, is calling the *La* of the deceased, which is supposed to be hovering around till the funeral rites are completed; when, should it respond to the call, it is bidden to depart in peace to Hades.

When the apparatus has been put in order, the relatives of the dead approach in succession and strike the head of the brass cup with a bit of bamboo; and when the one that was most beloved touches the cup, the *La* responds by twisting and stretching the string till it breaks, and falls into the cup; or at least shakes and rings against it.

A hundred witnesses could be produced, who have seen it done. Indeed, the thread is of such slender material that a very little legerdemain would be required to break it under the weight of the bangle, and the bamboo is so slender, that still less would be necessary to make it spring up and down, and hit against the sides of the cup. But I have watched the whole ceremony, kept the crowd away from the machinery, and there was no more answer to the calls, than there was to the cries of the priests of Baal before Elijah.

Spatulancy or Divination by Fowls' Bones.*— Indifferent as the Karens are in regard to matters connected with the next world, they are keenly anxious to anticipate future events in this, and never enter into the commonest undertakings of life that involve any uncertainty of result, much less the more

* Divination by bones, skins, and excrements, so called by Gaule in his "Magastromancers Posed and Puzzled."

Brand's "Popular Antiquities," iii, p. 30.

Most of this paper on augury has appeared in the "Phœnix."

important, without consulting and obtaining a favourable response from the augury of fowls' bones.

Their method of divination is as follows:—An elder,* skilled in the interpretation of fowls' bones, is appointed master of the ceremonies, and a fowl is placed in his hands.

After invoking the presiding spirit to reveal the truth that is in him, in reply to the inspection of the augury, he causes the fowl to be killed, and, after extracting the leg and wing bones, he holds them parallel between his forefinger and thumb, placing the right and left bones in juxtaposition on his right and left respectively, the minute air-holes for the transmission of the blood-vessels being upwards. He then ascertains whether the bones differ or assimilate in any way, and accurately notes the number and relative position of the little apertures on their surface, into each of which he inserts a straw to indicate its direction. "Should they," says Mr. O'Riley, "occur in certain forms considered favourable, and in accordance with his own previously conceived result, he is satisfied with the spirits' approbation, and his mind is relieved of all care for the future result of his undertaking."

But as many irregularities are noticeable in the bones of different fowls, and in the holes therein, there are many nice distinctions that have to be

* With the ancient Greeks and Romans the power of interpreting the signs furnished by the gods was thought to depend on a peculiar talent conferred on the favoured mortal from his birth; but a certain discipline was necessary to give to the talent its full development. With the Karens, the elders are looked upon as the recognised interpreters of their augury without such discipline.

attended to, so that it requires an adept in the art of divination to read the oracle correctly; and, as the elders do not always agree in their readings, a second or third fowl is killed, till the desired result is obtained.

Thus, by the mere turn of a straw, it is decided whether war shall, or shall not, be declared; whether an expedition shall be undertaken or abandoned; whether the marriage of a maiden who has already plighted her troth to her lover, shall be consummated or not; whether a wizard shall die or be suffered to live; whether an accused person be guilty or innocent, and as if to exemplify the very narrow margin that exists between the sublime and the ridiculous, an orthodox Karen would not venture to tempt Providence so far as to take an emetic or purgative, to name his child, dig his garden, or depart in any way from the ordinary groove of his domestic concerns without resorting to this oracle.

Once a year a national festival is held among the Bwé tribes in which this species of divination* is a most important feature. We are indebted to Dr. Mason for the following interesting account thereof.

"When the time approaches, the people prepared beforehand ardent spirits, and buy hogs and fowls, and get everything ready.

"When the time comes the villagers perform the ceremony, two or three or four families a-day, till it has gone through the whole village. The first thing done is to bring up two jars of arrack, and secure them by tying them to a bamboo, and the next is to

* "The rite," says Dr. Mason, "is called 'The good to do,' but of its origin, and object to the Karens, can give no account."

bring up a hog and fowls. Then an eating dish is washed and filled with water and set by the side of the jars with spirits."

"An elder is now called on," who takes a fowl in his hands, cuts off its bill, "dips its head and feet in water, and then drops the blood from the bleeding head on the forehead of the oldest man of the family that is performing the ceremony."

"The master of the ceremonies then addresses the elder, and says: 'The hand-tier devours three. Thou hast the jaundice, thou art shrivelled up, thou art not strong, thou art weakly. Now we give food and drink to the hand-tier. Mayest thou be strong. Mayest thou be vigorous. Mayest thou be established as the rock, indestructible as the hearthstones. Mayest thou have long life. Mayest thou have a protracted existence.' After besmearing the elder's forehead with the fowl's blood, the master of the ceremonies pinches a few feathers and a little down from the fowl's neck, and sticks them on the blood, while they adhere perhaps for the whole day."

He then addresses the fowl, and says: "Arouse, arouse, Thiekeu's* fowl, Mokhie's fowl we give thee food, we afford thee sustenance. Thou drinkest in a knowledge of the future, thou eatest superhuman power. In the morning, thou seest the hawk, in the evening thou seest man. The seven heavens, thou ascendest to the top; the seven earths, thou descendest to the bottom. Thou arrivest at Khuthe; thou goest unto Tha-ma [*i.e.*, Yu-ma, the judge of

* Thiekeu, or Moklar, seems to be equivalent to Indra. "The Bwĕs," says Dr. Mason, "regard the fowl as the bird of Indra, the king of the Deva heavens."

the dead]. Thou goest through the crevices of rocks, thou goest through the crevices of precipices. At the opening and shutting of the western gates of the rock, thou goest in between; thou goest below the earth where the sun travels. I employ thee, I exhort thee. I make thee a messenger, I make thee an angel. Good, thou revealest; evil, thou revealest. Arouse thee fowl, arouse; reveal what is in thee. Now I exhort thee, I entreat thee; if this man is to live to an old age, if his head is not to be bent down, if he is not to come down crash, like a falling tree, let the right hand bone come uneven, let the bones be short and long. Thou art skilled in the words of the elders, thou knowest the language of old men. The good, thou fully knowest; with the evil thou art perfectly acquainted. Fowl, I exhort thee, I entreat thee; reveal whatever is in thee. And now, if this man's head is to bend down, if he is to come down crash, like a falling tree, if he is to be unable to rest himself from incessant trouble; if unable to overcome obstacles which shall meet him on every hand; if unable to rise up or lie down, if his life is not to be prolonged, if he cannot live, then, fowl, come up unpropitious, come up with the tendon short on the right side, come wrong end foremost. If he be able to obtain sufficient to support life, if he be not overcome by feuds, fowl, come up even. Thiekeu's fowl, Mokhie's fowl, I pull out thy feathers, I pull at thy skin, I dip thy head, I dip thy feet. Arouse fowl, reveal what is in thee."

Everyone in succession is then besmeared on his forehead with the blood of a separate fowl; and then everyone marks his own fowl by tying a string

to it that he may recognise it after being cooked. Some tie a string on the neck, others on the leg, others on the wing, and others elsewhere. They next scorch off the feathers, and boil them.

Mr. O'Riley and Dr. Mason quote legends in connection with this superstition, from which we find that in ancient times God gave the Chinese a book of paper, the Burmese a book of palm-leaf, and the Karens a book of skin, each containing His written law. The Chinese and Burmese took care of their books and diligently studied them, but the Karens did not sufficiently value their copy, and leaving it in an insecure place, a hog tore it into fragments, which were afterwards picked up by fowls. The great loss that had befallen the Karens was only brought home to them when they found that the Chinese and the Burmese excelled them in knowledge, owing to their acquaintance with books. They came to the conclusion, however, that as the fowls had eaten up their book they must necessarily possess all the knowledge that it contained, consequently fowls were at once recognised as the depositories of the lost law, and have ever since been consulted through the medium of their bones.

To Colonel Low* we are indebted for another version of this story. He relates that a "Superior Intelligence" vouchsafed to the Karens a religious and civil code, which was engrossed on parchment. This was by accident left on a bush whilst its keeper crossed a stream, and a dog seized and ran off with the precious roll.

The dog on being pursued drooped his prize, but

* "Journ. Ind. Arch.," vol. iv, No. 8.

before the owner could recover it, a fowl scratched out the characters inscribed thereon. Hence, according to Colonel Low's informant, the Karens venerate the feet of the common fowl, because the sacred writing adhered to them. He concludes his article, however, with a crude notice of the divination by fowl's *bones*, and had he followed up his inquiries on this subject, it is very probable he would have modified his conclusions as to the alleged reverence shown to fowls' feet.

The common barn-door fowl, like the progenitors of the Karens themselves, was a native of Central Asia, whence it passed into Persia, over which country (according to Aristophanes) it reigned supreme prior to Darius and Megabasus. From Persia it found its way into Greece, and thence through Rome to France and Britain. In all these countries it was regarded superstitiously. In Persia it was used for the purposes of divination, as it was afterwards by the Greeks and Romans. It was a cock that assured Themistocles of his victory over Xerxes, influenced the decision of Romulus in choosing the site of Rome, and inspired Numa Pompilius.*

Coming nearer home, we find in Croker's "Researches in the South of Ireland" that in the year 1325 A.D., a woman was charged with having sacrificed nine red cocks to her familiar spirit.† Cross-

* "Trans. Eth. Soc. Lond.," vol. v, p. 166.

† The sacrifice alluded to by Croker is mentioned in Jacobus Grace, "Kilkenniensis Annales Hibernia," published for the Irish Archæological Society, 1842. *Red* cocks are sacrificed by

ing the snows of the Himalayas, and travelling in a southerly direction, the cock seems to have imbued the inhabitants with a similar superstition to that we have noticed among the Celts, for the Buddhists of Ceylon and the low castes in the south of India used to sacrifice red cocks to evil spirits. Turning his back on his Central Asian home, and visiting Eastern countries, his progress has been marked with similar results, for even the matter-of-fact Chinaman has succumbed to his influence;—sacrificing a cock before a Court of Justice, when giving evidence, being considered by him as equivalent to the most binding oath.

The cock then, in archaic times, seems to have been a distinguished and honoured guest, although subsequent ages have so far modified the veneration originally paid him as to utilise* him as an article of food, somewhat in the same fashion as the South Sea Islanders are said to have "utilised" their mis-

the Santals in honour of their *Lares rurales*. Dr. Hunter's "Annals of Rural Bengal," p. 183.

"A.D. 1325. Ricardus Ledered, Episcopus Ossoriensis, citavit Aliciam Ketil, ut se purgaret de heretica pravitate; quæ Magiæ convicturet, nam certo comprobatum est, quendam demonem incubam (nomine Robin Artesson) concubuisse cumea, cui ipsa obtulerat novem Gallos rubeos, apud quendam pontem [illegible]pideum in quadrivia."—"Notes and Queries," 3rd series, ix, [illegible].

[illegible]e also "Proceedings against Dame Alice Kyteler," edited by Mr. Wright for the Camden Society, 1843.

* To what date we may refer the cessation of the prejudice against eating poultry is unknown, but they were favourite food in the seventh century. In the course of a few centuries the merits of the cock lived down the ill fame it brought to England with it, and it rose to the popularity it has ever since maintained."—"Trans. Eth. Soc. London," v.

sionaries after their first feelings of reverence wore off.*

Claiming, as the Karens do, a common home with this well-known bird, and possibly leaving the Great Central Plateau simultaneously, it would indeed be surprising if they were not somewhat tinged with a superstition so universal.

Their augury by fowls' bones, according to Mr. Lockhart, is essentially the same as that which obtains among the Miáu-tsze or hill tribes of China, with whom, by some accounts the Karens bear considerable affinity.

Marco Polo refers to a divination by a cane split into two pieces, by which certain Christian astrologers foretold the issue of a battle between the troops of Chinghis Khan and Prester John, which may have had a common origin with the Karen superstition. There is no doubt that practices with similar objects in view, although perhaps not exactly like the Karen method, have existed from the most ancient times.

We have the following interesting note on the text of the Venetian, by Colonel Yule. "A Tartar divination by twigs, but different from that here employed, is older than Herodotus, who ascribes it to the Scythians."† We hear of one something like the last among the Alans, and from Tacitus, among the Germans. The words of Hosea (iv, 12), "My people ask council at their stocks, and their staff declareth unto them," are thus explained by Theophylactus :—

"They stuck up a couple of sticks, whilst murmuring certain charms and incantations; the sticks

* "South Sea Bubbles," by the Earl and the Doctor.

† Yule's "Marco Polo," i, 213.

then by the operation of devils, direct or indirect, would fall over and the direction of the fall was noted," &c. The Chinese method of divination comes still nearer to that on the text. It is conducted by tossing in the air two symmetrical pieces of wood or mambo of a peculiar form.*

The divination by the bones of a sheep in vogue with the ancient British and the Persians, seems identical with the Karen augury, for we read that on the faintly traced lines and marks observable in the shoulder blade of a sheep, future events were supposed to be indicated to those who had the skill to read them.†

That we to this day resort to a kind of divination of fowls' bones is proved by the very common custom observed by young people of pulling the merry-thought of a fowl to ascertain which of them will

* Yule's "Marco Polo," 214, n.

† Mr. Pennant gives an account of a species of divination used in Scotland, called *Sleinanachd* or reading the *Speal Bone* or the blade-bone of a shoulder of mutton.

Drayton, in his "Polybion," Song v, mentions,

"A divination strange the Dutch made English have,
Appropriate to that place (as tho' some power it gave),
By the shoulder of a ram from off the outside par'd,
Which usually they boil, the blade-bone being bar'd,
Which when the wizard takes and gazing thereupon—
Things long to come foreshows, as things done long agone."

Dr. Brown tells us that the Highlanders having cleanly picked the flesh off the shoulder of mutton, which was supposed to lose its virtue if touched by iron, they turned towards the east, and with looks steadily fixed on the transparent bone, they pretended to foretell death, burials, &c."—"History of the Highlands, &c.," p. 116.

Camden in his "Ancient and Modern Manners of the Irish," says, "they look through the blade-bone of a sheep, and if they

be married first.* Possibly the practice may owe its origin to the ancient custom of deducing omens from the inside of animals. Whatever then may be said in reference to the superstition which forms the subject of this paper, it cannot be said to pertain exclusively to the Karens.

Lares and Penates.—As not only all the prominent objects of nature, but also everything that adds to the comfort or the pleasure of man, even to the axe with which he fells the trees of the forest, and the knife that he sticks in his girdle, has its presiding deity, it is hardly necessary to add that beings similar to the *Lares* and *Penates*. of the ancient Romans hold a prominent place in Karen mythology.

It is a matter of some difficulty to know who the *Penates* were, but there is no reason for supposing that they were the same in every family. So with the Karens there is much confusion in relation to the character of the beings addressed. Besides the many tutelary demons, who may be said to be public property, the Karens (as we have already noticed) appear to recognise a distinct order of spirits, which has no concern with "outsiders," and with whom the head of the family only has to

see a spot in it darker than ordinary, foretell that somebody will be buried out of the house."

Hanway says that they have a similar divination in Persia.

See Brand's "Popular Antiquities," iii, pp. 30, 179, 180, and 174. Gough's "Camden," vol. iii, p. 659. Also Hanway's "Travels in Persia," vol. i, p. 177.

* The *Spectator* thus notices this custom. "I have seen a man in love turn pale and lose his appetite from the plucking of merry-thought."—Brand's "Popular Antiq.," iii, 117.

do; just as the master of a Roman family was the priest to the *Penates* of his own house, a custom still retained, it is said, by the modern Genoese.

The Lahones, a tribe located near the Kakhyens, between Bhamò and Momein have also a guardian spirit of the house which they call Shitah, and none of other tribes is allowed to go through the door sacred to him without having first presented a peace offering to the nât.*

FOLK LORE.

Witchcraft.—If we look at our own early history, it will be seen that Witchcraft was one of the oldest and most deeply rooted articles of the superstitious belief of the Anglo-Saxons. It was rightly considered by them as a relic of paganism, and as such was proscribed by all the earliest ecclesiastical laws.† It was made a punishable offence by secular law so far as it was supposed to be the means of inflicting personal injury. Subsequently, however, the ecclesiastical courts seemed to have lost jurisdiction, for Wright says,‡ "Till the fourteenth century witchcraft and sorcery appear to have been crimes cognizable in the secular and not in the ecclesiastical courts." But its existence was not doubted and was looked upon with the more horror as being the supposed results of some kind of intercourse with the spirits of evil, the "demons" who were generally supposed to have been the objects and supporters of

* Dr. Anderson's "Expedition to Yunan," p. 126.

† See introduction to "Proceedings against Dame Alice Kyteler," by Mr. Wright, Camden Society.

‡ Ibid., p. viii.

idolatry. These demons, it was supposed were either compelled to perform certain things by spells which bound them, or were excited to act in favour of persons who performed certain superstitious rites.

The Karens hold somewhat the same belief as our forefathers, and the analogy between the two systems is still further borne out by the fact that neither with the Karens, nor with the Anglo-Saxons, do we find any traces of those compacts with the evil one which became so famous in after times.

In the laws of King Ethelred and Cnut, witches and sorcerers were strongly denounced. In one of the edicts of the latter occurs the following passage:—"We earnestly forbid every heathenism. Heathenism is that men worship idols: that is, that they worship heathen gods, and the sun or moon, fire or rivers, water, wells, or stones, or forest trees of any kind; or love witchcraft, or promote *morth* work in anywise; or by *blot* or *fyrht*, or perform anything pertaining to such allusions."

A sorcerer or magician, says Grose,* differs from a witch† in this, a witch derives all her power from a compact with the devil. A sorcerer commands him and the infernal spirits by his skill in powerful charms and invocations.

In Karen mythology there is nothing to correspond with this definition of witch, although they have necromancers "who profess to have eyes to

* Brand's "Pop. Antiquities," iii, p. 30.

† "The word witch (unrelated to wizard, *weissen*) comes from the old saxon *wig*, an idol; and there is no doubt that the witches of old times were at first practisers of some of the old Pagan rites."—"Fraser's Magazine" for November, 1872, p. 597.

see unseen spirits, to tell what they are doing, and even to go to Hades, and converse with the spirits of the dead there."

They are believed to be ordinary persons under demoniacal influence, who, if all accounts be true, are quite as malignant as the veritable witches and sorcerers of western lore.

The Karens have peculiar conceits in reference to persons possessed with a familiar spirit, which some tribes call *Na* and others *Ne*.

Mr. Cross* appears to think that *Na* is identical with the Burman *Nat*, synonymous with the *Deva*, or Devata, of Hindu mythology, and that the Burmese either borrowed the term from the Karens, or that both are derived from a common source. Dr. Mason (we believe rightly) is of opinion that *Nat* denotes an entirely different being.

The *Na*, or *Kephoo*, as it is sometimes called, is, according to one myth, said to be a horrid vampire, which sallies forth at night in the repulsive form of a human head and entrails, seeking whom it may devour. A person possessed of a *Na*, under the strange hallucination that human beings are rats, dogs, pigs, or other animals fit for human food, is supposed incontinently to devour them.

An instance is given of a man going so far as to eat himself up. The story for which we are indebted to Dr. Mason, is as follows :—

"Once upon a time, there was a worthy couple who had two little daughters.

"When the younger was able to leave home, she followed her father to the field.

* "Journ. Amer. Or. Soc.," iv, 314.

"On arriving at the foot of a tree, the bewitching power of an evil spirit came on the man, and he devoured his child.

"He then went home, and said to his wife, 'The young child is unhappy alone, send to her the elder sister.' So the other child went along with her father, and on arriving at the foot of the same tree, he ate her up also.

"He returned again to the house, and said to his wife, 'The children are not happy in the field alone, go to them.'

"So she followed her husband to the foot of the tree, where he left her to seek an impaling stick.

"A touktay or lizard in the tree, thought to himself, 'This woman knows nothing; her husband will eat her.'

"Thinking thus, he called out, 'This night thy husband will eat thee. If thou believest me not, look by the side of the road, and thou wilt see the skulls of thy children.'

"The woman looked, and saw what the touktay said was true. She was greatly terrified, and said to the latter, 'Grandfather! what shall I do?'

"The touktay replied, 'if thou art afraid, take hold of my tail firmly, and fear no more.' The woman did as she was bid, and the touktay drew her up to the tree top by his tail.

"Soon her husband came back with an impaling stick on his shoulder, and said, 'old rat,* where are you?'

* This exemplifies what we have said above. The man being possessed with a Na, his wife appeared to him as a rat, and he proposed to impale her on a stick and roast her, as he would a rat, which Karen epicures consider a dainty dish.

"He sought for his wife everywhere roundabout, but did not discover her; while she, almost dead with fear, was holding on to the tail of the touktay, who said to her, 'Hold on firm, I am afraid thou wilt let go.'

"When the man could not find his wife, he actually ate himself!

"He sliced up his hands, arms, feet, and legs, his flesh and skin, and left nothing but his trunk.

"On this, the touktay saying to the woman, 'Your husband cannot devour you now; fear him no more,' let her down by his tail.

"When the man* saw her, he cried out, 'Woman, restore me to life;' but she left him, and ran away as fast as she could go to her friends."

According to another myth, a person possessed of a Na, is said to attack and destroy the Là, or vital principle, leaving the body intact; and if not too viciously inclined, to eat the eyes only, which in some unaccountable way retain their shape and substance, but become blind. Such persons are also supposed, by their sorceries, to be able to cause others, however distant, to be attacked by disease, resulting in death; and so strong is the belief of the Karens in their supernatural power, that contagious or malignant diseases, such as cholera, small pox, or measles, are almost always attributed to their malignant influence.

* This was, doubtless, the *La* of the deceased, not the man himself, for in some of the Karen representations of the future state it will be noticed that the man is absorbed in the La which after the death of the person it protects, enters on a new state of existence.

They are put to death* if accessible, but it not infrequently happens that, by the augury of fowls' bones, it is discovered that the objectionable *Na* resides in a village against which the sufferers have a feud, and a claim for *akha*, or compensation, is at once made on its chief, to be followed up by a raid if he refuses to comply with their extortionate demands.

Persons possessed of Nas are held to be accursed; and it is considered quite as meritorious to get rid of them as to kill dangerous animals or poisonous snakes. Apropos of this subject, Dr. Mason records an instance of two young men who appeared before a Karen magistrate in Mergui, and charged a man with possessing a *Na*. The magistrate's reply was such that they immediately went and killed the man in open day. Such an evil influence is supposed to emanate from people so possessed, that even their praise is considered unlucky. Hence, one must be chary of praising the Karens or their possessions; for, if by chance any misfortune should happen to them subsequently, he may find himself in the unenviable position of a reputed Na.

Another idea prevalent among the Karens is, that nightmare is caused by a Na sitting on the stomach of the person afflicted. This (as Dr. Mason points out) is precisely the same notion as they used to have in Europe, and is not unlike the Runic theology, in which "Mara, from which our nightmare was derived, is held to be a spectre of the

* So in the Jewish law it was commanded that, "A man also, or woman, that hath a familiar spirit, or that is a wizard, shall surely be put to death." Leviticus xx, 27.

night, which seized men in their sleep, and suddenly deprived them of speech and motion." But there is nothing in Karen mythology, analogous to the old Gothic or Scandinavian superstition in reference to a witch riding horses at night.

A person possessed of a Na has the power to take the form of another, and this interchange of persons is sometimes affected by a change of skins. Dr. Mason quotes stories related of a woman named *Pokla*, black as a crow, who, endowed with this faculty, amused herself by putting on skins of white women, giving them her own black skin in exchange. One of these is a charming idyll, in which Pokla, when slave of a young man of property, succeeded in exchanging skins with the beautiful white bride of her master, without the latter's suspecting the change.

The lovely bride was now beaten and cruelly used by her former slave, and obliged to perform every menial office. One of her occupations was to scare the birds from the crops, and while so engaged she managed to secure the affection and allegiance of the feathered tribe. One of these, the dove, she commissioned to secure for her some miraculous fragrant oil with which she anointed herself, and became "beautiful for ever." With the confidence which her renewed attractiveness gave her, she denounced Pokla to her husband, and, in proof of her assertion, told him that he would be satisfied of Pokla's deceit by looking at her tongue. But Pokla was fully aware of her one weak point, and it was difficult to obtain a sight of her tongue.

All attempts to make her laugh failed, but on being struck suddenly, she screamed and exposed

her tongue, which was seen to be jet black. Her master being convinced of her real character, slew her with a sword.

His true wife at first refused to live with him again, but after he had satisfied her of his contrition, by performing a penance she enjoined on him, she relented, and they lived happily afterwards.

The "Trolls" of Norse folk-lore, like the Nas of the Karens, sometimes change skins with ordinary mortals, and cause confusion and trouble by so doing.

From "New Tales from the Norse,"* we read of a youth, who, with a companion, went roaming about the world in search of a princess of whom he had dreamt, and by means of magical instruments, which he had obtained from certain "*Troll-wives*," was enabled to find the princess, and after many adventures, to marry her.

"On the wedding night," so says the tale, "she intended to kill him during his slumbers, but he, acting on the advice of his follower, did not go to sleep, and he jumped up and seized her when just about to commit the murderous act. Having whipped her well with rods, he then proceeded, according to his follower's instructions, to scrub her skin ('which was as black as a crow all over her body') with a kind of cheese, and afterwards to scour it with sour milk and sluice it with sweet milk, the result of the treatment being that the 'Troll-hide slipped off her, and she became soft and fair; fairer than she had ever been before.'"

The Karen *Na*, has not only all the attributes of the Norwegian *Troll*, as well as of the witches and

* "Fraser's Magazine" for November, 1872.

wizards of our ancient mythologies, but it also seems to be endowed with peculiarities which amount to a *spécialité* in demoniacal acquirements. Dr. Mason says that *Na* is analagous to the Burmese *Sung*, which we presume to be equivalent to *Sŏn*. But *Sŏn* with the qualitative masculine or feminine affix, is simply a wizard or witch of the ordinary type, of somewhat inferior position to the *Nats*, or tutelary deities of the Burmese, and consequently of less importance as an object of dread than the Karen *Na*.

The belief in the existence of these Nas*is, we believe, still prevalent among even the more civilised tribes, although education has done much to dispel this and other absurd illusions.

Necromancers—Wees.—Having disposed of the sorcerers, who, according to Karen religion, are "Anathema and Maranatha;" we will now proceed to give some particulars in reference to their orthodox necromancers or *Wees*, who are supposed, and suppose themselves, capable of working themselves into a "superior state," in which they are enabled to see what is invisible to other men. They can see the departed life or spirit (the sentient soul) of the dead, and even have the power of recalling this spirit, and bringing it back to its body, and thus restoring the dead* to life. When a prophet is approached by an inquirer after future events, or anything which is hidden from other men, the prophet's first object is to throw himself into a state

* We have a very remarkable instance in Scripture of witchcraft being resorted to in view to holding communication with the dead, when at the request of Saul the Witch of Endor caused the appearance of Samuel by her incantations.

of clairvoyance. He writhes his body and limbs, rolls himself on the ground, and often foams at the mouth in the violence of his paroxysms. When he is satisfied with his condition, he becomes calm and makes his prophetic announcement.*

There is another class of prophets of a different character, rarely making pretensions to the predictions of future events, who are called *Bookhahs*, or masters of feasts, and might be called the priests of religion. They have methods of determining the future in cases of sickness, take the direction of the general religious ceremonies of the people, and teach the doctrines of the system they adopt in worship, the charms, &c. They are not so much dreaded by people as the *Wees*.†

Among the Karens proper, it would appear that it is not absolutely necessary that a necromancer shall be subject to any discipline before he assumes his functions, and in this respect they differ from many savage peoples in various parts of the world, who put no confidence in those who do not give evidence of being qualified for this position by their acknowledged or assumed superiority over ordinary mortals.

According to Major Sladen,‡ one who aspires to the dignity of Medium or Necromancer among the *Kakhyens*, who, with some truth, are said to bear close affinity to the Karens, must climb a ladder made of sharp swords with their edges upwards, and

* "J. A. O. S.," iv, 305, 306.

† Ibid., 307, 308.

‡ "Official Narrative of Expedition to Western China," p. 49.

sit on a platform thick set with spikes, without personal inconvenience, before he is believed in.

In Dr. Anderson's more recent work, no mention appears to be made of this fact, and it would seem, from what he heard, that on a youth exhibiting certain phases of character, he is encouraged to cultivate them and is duly installed when the recognised medium dies.*

The many interesting particulars Dr. Anderson gives of the *Kakhyen* sorcerers, are valuable in bearing additional testimony in favour of the supposition that the *Kakhyens* and Karens are allied.*

These sorcerers, he says, are of two kinds, the *Toomsah* and the *Meetway.*

The *Toomsah* attends on all occasions on which sacrifices have to be offered; and in cases of sickness, resulting either from natural causes, or from the influence of bad *Nâts*, he is called to ascertain from the spirits the kind of offerings required for the removal of the spell, and to assist at the sacrifice to which he has to invite the presence of the *Nâts.*

The *Meetway* is not a sacrificial priest, and his services are only called into requisition when it is desirable to ascertain the mind of the *Nâts* on questions of importance. He foretells future events by the occurrence of certain natural phenomena, such as the peculiar appearance of fowls' bones, and from the character of the fracture of pieces of "null" grass which have been held over a flame.† "The *Meetway,*" Dr. Anderson says, in another place, "when he is consulted, becomes like a person possessed with a

* Anderson's "Expedition to Yunan," p. 126.

† Ibid.

devil. He seats himself in a corner of the house on a small stool, surrounded by the anxious chiefs and their head-men, and with his elbows resting on his knees, and his face buried in his hands, his body begins to quiver from head to foot, and piteous yells and groans announce that the *Nât* is entering into him. When the demon has gained possession of the priest, he then communicates the line of action that the chiefs are to pursue, and how many buffaloes or pigs it will be necessary to offer to secure the goodwill of the Nâts.

"The similarity of these ceremonies to those described by Marco Polo as prevailing during his time in *Kardaudan* requires no remark."

The Kakhyen necromancer has, therefore, all the minor attributes of his Karen confrère, but he does not appear to have the more enviable faculty said to be possessed by the latter of being able to go to Hades, converse with the spirits of the dead there; and, if desirable, to compel their return to the bodies they have abandoned.

While, therefore, we may deplore these superstitious practices on the part of the Karens, it will be found that even in these enlightened days, many simple persons may be met with in England every whit as credulous on the subject of witchcraft as these poor people; and we must not forget at the same time that little more than two centuries ago thousands of people, including persons of the highest rank, were put to death on charges of witchcraft, approved and confirmed by King James I, who further gave his countenance to these diabolical proceedings by publishing a work entitled "Dialogues of Dæmonologie."

CHAPTER VIII.

Rise and Progress of Christianity.

Victims as the Karens are of a degrading superstition, that recognises the efficacy of offerings to spirits or demons, for benefit in this life, without fear and without hope as regards their future state, they afford an instance of a people who, humanly speaking, seem impracticable to the teachings emanating from a purer faith. But the history of religion teaches us that many rude and uncultured races, whose only worship consists in the adoration of the heavenly bodies, or the principal objects of nature, present as it were a virgin soil in which the seed of new ideas takes root and fructifies; whereas, sown where the alluring dogmas of Mahomet have been firmly established, or the metaphysical conceptions of Brahma or Buddha have taken hold of the imagination, the seed often falls on barren soil and dies.

Mahomet taught his followers many admirable moral maxims, permitted the plurality of wives and concubinage, and promised the faithful a sensual paradise, in short, offered them a faith which, appealing to the moral instincts, as well as to the carnal appetite of human nature, is eminently calculated to enslave its votaries.

The same may be said in reference to the Hindoo

and Buddhist religions, but from a different stand point. Both, by elevating the soul from those "imperfections forced on her by connection with matter, and setting her free from the sway of passions that keep her linked to the world,"* have a common object in view, although both are at variance as to the end to be arrived at. "The Brahmin leads the perfected being to the supreme essence, in which he is merged as a drop of water in the ocean, losing its personality to form a whole with the Divine substance."

"The Buddhist, ignoring a supreme being, conducts the individual that has been emancipated from the thraldom of passions to a state of complete isolation called Neibbau or Nirvana."†

Although based on many capital and revolting errors, these religions, as originally conceived, are remarkable for the purity of the precepts they inculcate, the moral truths they teach, the vast ability with which they have been projected, and the intimate knowledge of human nature evinced by their projectors.

It is no wonder, therefore, that their adherents hold stedfastly to their faith, and that the efforts of Christian missionaries to grapple with and disentangle the labyrinth of metaphysical ideas and theory of metempsychosis, which comprise the fundamental doctrines of these religions, are comparatively speaking futile.

Where such or similar barriers do not exist, the blessed truths of Christianity have been disseminated

* Bigandet's "Life of Gaudama," p. 86, n.

† Ibid., p. 21, n.

with almost incredible success, and bear out the wisdom of our Lord's saying, "Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes."

The mission of St. Augustine to England, and the baptism of the natives at the rate of ten thousand a-day, owed its origin to the presence of English slaves in Rome.

St. Gregory, when he saw the Angli, desired for them the condition of angels, and fired by a missionary spirit, started for England to convert them, but finally committed the work to St. Augustine.

So the mission to the Karens originated in the presence of a Karen slave in the family of a Burman Christian, who afterwards proved a second Augustine to his countrymen.

This slave, known as *Ko-tha-byn*, had been redeemed by a Christian Burman from his Buddhist master, owing to the missionaries expressing a wish to become more acquainted with a people of whom little was known for several years after their arrival in the country.

He was described as rude, passionate, and otherwise disagreeable, so that he proved an unpleasant accession to the family of the philanthropic Burman, and an arrangement was entered into by which his services were transferred to Dr. Judson and Mrs. Wade, and not long afterwards, says the latter, "we began to perceive the influence of religion on his outward character, and that by slow degrees, light dawned upon his dark mind, and the work of the Holy Spirit became perceptible on his hard heart."*

* Mrs. Wyllie's "Gospel in Burmah," p. 41.

It was characteristic of that pride of race which never dies with a Burman, that the Burmese converts were at first slow to acknowledge the right of the poor despised Karen to be admitted into their Church; but it was equally honourable to them as a Christian community to purge the old leaven from their hearts, and vote unanimously for his admission, so soon as they were convinced that he was a fit subject for baptism.

Koh-tha-byn, the first Karen convert, was accordingly baptised on the 16th May, 1828, by Mr. Boardman, whom he accompanied to Tavoy.

This remarkable man had been a robber and a murderer, and possessed such an ungovernable temper, that even after his conversion, he had often to spend many hours in prayer for strength to overcome it.*

"His frailties, however," says Dr. Mason, "should be compared, not with those of one who was born under Christian influences, and has been subjected to the restraints of civilised society, but with those of a youth and manhood spent in a manner that makes me shudder to think of and unwilling to repeat; so that often under the influence of passion, he said things that would be quite inexcusable in others."†

He was very illiterate, but his mental powers, though limited, were well directed, and "he had the rare faculty of concentrating all his powers and bringing them to bear upon a certain point. Thus

* Mrs. Wyllie's "Gospel in Burmah," p. 50.

† "The Karen Apostle," p. 39.

having once realized the great doctrine of justification by faith, it seemed to be all-sufficient for him. It was the alpha and omega of his preaching, for, ignorant as he was upon all other subjects, and obtuse in all his conceptions to a proverb, the moment he touched his favourite theme, he exhibited a power and force of illustration that surprised all that knew him."*

These qualifications eminently adapted him as a pioneer among the wild and untutored Karens, with whom his thorough earnestness seems to have commended itself in a most remarkable degree. Glorying in, and never weary of repeating the message of glad tidings which had proved of such comfort to himself, he carried conviction to the hearts of his hearers, and by his indefatigable and earnest labours, earned for himself the title of Karen Apostle,† a most appropriate cognomen for the first Karen preacher to his countrymen in the districts of Tavoy, Moulmain, Rangoon, and Arakan.

Koh-tha-byn, soon after his baptism became a preacher to his people, and travelled all over the Tenasserim provinces to proclaim the Gospel.

Mainly through his influence, the timid Karens, laying aside their fears of civilised life and its belongings, flocked in from the distant jungles with curious interest to see the white teacher, Mr. Board-

* "The Karen Apostle," p. 70.

† Dr. Mason's work entitled "The Karen Apostle, or Memoir of Ko-tha-byn," published by the Religious Tract Society, was well calculated to create a deep and lasting interest in the Karens.

As this admirable little book is out of print, and not easily procurable, we need not, we think, apologise to our readers for embodying therefrom such extracts as may illustrate our subject.

man, and to listen to the wonderful truths he taught.

One community so far testified their confidence in Mr. Boardman as to bring with them a sacred book which had been entrusted to them by a Mahomedan, fully recognising in him the teacher whom their traditions taught them would be able to explain its mysteries. This book had been preserved by them with the greatest care, and was considered an object of veneration and worship, although they were ignorant of its contents.

They were anxious, therefore, to have Mr. Boardman's opinion upon the venerated relic, and with considerable ceremony escorted it to his residence and reverently unfolding its muslin envelope, disclosed to his view a tattered and worn-out volume, which proved to be the "Book of Common Prayer and the Psalms." "It is a good book," said Mr. Boardman, "it teaches that there is a God in Heaven, whom alone we should worship. You have been ignorantly worshipping this book; that is not good; I will teach you to worship the God whom the book reveals;" paraphrasing perhaps involuntarily the words of St. Paul to the Athenians, when he stood in the midst of Mars Hill, and declared unto them the *unknown God* whom they ignorantly worshipped.

Prepared to listen to what the teacher said, the latter was not slow to avail himself of the splendid opportunity afforded him for revealing its truths, and the Karens, it is said, evinced the greatest interest in the instructions which he gave them.

"The aged sorcerer who had been the keeper of the book for twelve years, on hearing Mr. Board-

man's decision, perceived that his office was at an end, relinquished the fantastical dress he had worn, and the cudgel which for so long had been the badge of his spiritual authority, and subsequently became a humble believer in the Lord Jesus Christ." *

The devotion to work and anxiety which distinguished Mr. Boardman began to tell upon his health, just when the results of the embryo Karen Mission began to be most hopeful, and for more than a year before his death "with the very important exception of Mrs. Boardman's invaluable labours with the people when they visited the town, the whole care of the church, and the instruction of the inquirers, devolved on Ko-tha-byn, and the numbers that were baptized within this period afford the best comment on his labours." †

Preaching with him was a subject of absorbing interest, and "if Karens were accessible, no fatigue, no obstacles would prevent his seeking them out, but if not, he would attack the Burmans and their idolatry most unmercifully, utterly heedless of the ridicule that they would sometimes heap upon him for being an ignorant Karen."

An anecdote is also told of him when he was in danger of being upset in a boat near Moulmain, illustrating his ruling passion. "I shall be drowned," said he, "and never more preach the word of God to the Karens.' ‡ Still "he was not adapted to the pastoral office, his work was breaking up the fallow ground, and casting in the seed. Send him to a

* "Gospel in Burmah," pp. 53, 54.
† "The Karen Apostle," p. 33.
‡ Ibid., p. 35.

new post, and everything seemed to give way before him, allow him to remain, and the very individuals who, a little time before had blessed God for his instrumentality in their conversion, were ready to exchange his services for those of any other man, and yet no man was more highly esteemed by the native Christians than Ko-tha-byn, while he applied himself to his appropriate work."*

After the missionaries had baptized several hundred Karen converts in Tavoy and Moulmain, Ko-tha-byn proceeded to Rangoon to assist Mr. Bennett, and there also he was the first to proclaim the Gospel to his heathen countrymen. The great success that attended his labours aroused the opposition of the Burmese officials, and the Christians, it is said, were sorely persecuted, even unto death.

"His health becoming feeble, and war being expected between the English and Burmese, he returned to Moulmain, and Sandoway, in Arakan, having been selected by the missionaries as favourably placed for opening up communication with the Karens who dwelt in Burmese territory."

Ko-tha-byn was chosen as one of the pioneers of this mission, which was established by Mr. Abbott, in 1840.

The news of the arrival of this mission soon spread, and "although the passes were guarded by Burmans, many escaped their watchful vigilance and flocked over the mountains, some for books, some for baptism, and others desiring to remain and study with their beloved teacher." †

* "The Karen Apostle," pp. 65, 66.

† "Gospel in Burmah," p. 106.

In this way Ko-tha-byn's converts found their way from the delta of the Irrawaddy in such numbers as to arouse the jealousy of the Burmese, and to induce them for a time to extend a more conciliatory policy to the Christians, lest they should be terrified into emigrating in a body into the British provinces. But a year or two afterwards, "in consequence of a royal order to exterminate the white people, and the religion of the foreigners, the persecution of the Karen Christians raged with unmitigated fury. In their houses and in their places of worship whole families were seized, and often cruelly beaten; while mothers, separated from their children, were driven like sheep to prison, where they remained until they could satisfy the rapacity of the Burman officers."

This oppression on the part of the Burmese caused hundreds of the persecuted Karens to leave the fields they could no longer cultivate, and escape into Arakan, with as much of their little possessions as they could hastily collect together. Their condition was most pitiable, and met with generous sympathy, not only from the missionaries, but from the British residents in the province.

Captain Phayre, the Assistant Commissioner, supplied them with food, and gave them one year to repay his loan without interest.

Ko-tha-byn, who had assisted in the work with his characteristic devotion, only remained long enough to inaugurate it satisfactorily, when he was summoned to his eternal rest.

Of him it was said that "perhaps not one in a thousand (from the days of the Apostles to the

present time) of those who may have devoted their lives exclusively to this work, have been the instrument of converting as many individuals as this simple-hearted Karen." When he died in 1840, or twelve years after his conversion, there were officially reported as members of Christian congregations in Pegu, above one thousand two hundred and seventy individuals of his countrymen, most of whom were indebted for their saving grace to his efforts. After his death Christianity rapidly spread, in spite of the drawbacks offered to its progress, and in 1852, or when the English declared war with Burmah, we find by a note from Dr. Mason, that seventy-six churches, with five thousand members, were reported to exist in Lower Pegu.

About the time of Ko-tha-byn's conversion, Dr. Judson baptized a respectable and intelligent Burman named *Ko-Myat-Kyan*, who had been a tax collector in the *Showĕ-gyen* district, and proved an honourable exception to the rule as regards Burmese officials, in making it a point of being familiar with the language, customs, &c., of the Karens. "After his conversion, *Ko-Myat-Kyan's* mind reverted with deep interest to the Karens, and he often assured the missionaries that they would receive the Gospel much more readily than the Burmese. His genuine enthusiasm on this subject enlisted the sympathy of the missionaries in behalf of this people, and they at once decided on making an effort towards their evangelization. We record the result in Dr. Wade's account quoted from Mrs. Wyllie's "Gospel in Burmah." He says, "My impressions on this point were so strong that, with the advice of Dr. Judson,

I set out with him, and two or three other Burman converts, to visit a Karen village at *Dongyan*, about twenty miles north of Moulmain.

"On our arrival, every man, woman and child had deserted their dwelling, and hid themselves in the jungles.

"We sat down in the shade of their houses, and after some time one or two of the men summoned sufficient courage to show themselves, and ask our object in coming to their village.

"Ko-Myat-Kyan told them our only object was to tell them about the true God, and the way of salvation.

"'Oh, is *that* your object?' they replied, 'we thought you were Government officials, and we were afraid; but if you are religious teachers, come to tell us of God, we are happy; we will listen, Have you brought God's Book? Our fathers say: the Karens once had God's Book written on leather (parchment), and they carelessly allowed it to be destroyed. Since then, as a punishment, we have been without books and without a written language. But our prophets say, the white foreigners have the book, and will in future time restore it to us. Behold, the white foreigners have come, as our prophets foretold! Have you brought God's Book?' (few of these simple timid villagers had before seen a 'white foreigner.') I replied, yes, we have brought the Book of God (showing them a Bible), but it is in the language of the foreigners, though parts of it have been translated into the language of the Burmans. Can you read Burman? 'No, we cannot; you must translate it for us, as you have for the Burmans.'

By this time the villagers generally had learned our object in coming, and ventured out of their hiding places, so that we had a large company of men and women and children around us; some eagerly examining my strange dress; others astonished at the whiteness of my face; but more still, intent on hearing what I had to say about the Book of God, which they had so long expected the white foreigners to bring them. To their last request, I replied, 'I came from the land of the foreigners, to teach the Burmans the true religion. I have learned their language, but do not understand Karen. I am obliged to speak to you through an interpreter; but I will write to those who sent me out, to send a teacher for the Karens, who will study your language, reduce it to writing, and translate God's Word for you, if on your part you will agree to learn to read, and let your children learn; else the labour and expense will be lost. Will the Karens do it?' 'Yes, we *will*, and we will worship God, when we are taught his requirements. Our fathers have told that when the white foreigners bring us the lost Book, and teach us the true religion, we must listen and obey, then prosperity will return to us: but if we do not listen and obey, we shall perish without remedy. Long have we suffered, and prayed for deliverance, and now that the white foreigner has come with the lost word of God, according to the saying of the fathers, if we do not listen, we know that the threatening also will be fulfilled. Yes, we will listen and obey; but how long will it take for a teacher to come, learn our language, reduce it to writing, and translate for us the Book of God?' I

said I thought it could be accomplished in ten years. 'Alas! it will not then be done in *my* day,' exclaimed a man who had nearly completed his three-score years and ten. 'But you must not wait for a new teacher, *you* must begin *at once*.' Many others joined in this request; but I could not then say, I will; for the idea of becoming a Karen missionary had not yet occurred to my mind; my hands were full of work in the Burman department, and thirty converts were baptized and added to the Burman church in Moulmain during that year."

It was then that Dr. Wade commenced the task, which he by degrees so successfully accomplished, of reducing the Karen language to writing. In the prosecution of this interesting work, and the evangelization of the people, his mind became involuntarily absorbed to the detriment of his health, so that he had to return to his native land for a season, after having baptized fourteen Karens, two or three of whom gave promise of becoming preachers of the Gospel to their heathen countrymen.

A Karen school had been opened in Moulmain, and left in charge of Dr. Judson, who also looked after the little community in which Dr. Wade was so interested, with such success that when the latter returned from America with Messrs. Vinton and Howard, as special missionaries to the Karens, he found that one hundred and eleven Karens "had been baptized, churches had been formed, a good number had learned to read their own language, and several of the most intelligent and best instructed were already travelling from village to village

preaching the 'Gospel of the Kingdom,' or watching over the little flocks in the wilderness."*

Dr. Wade, on arriving at Burmah, was directed to proceed to Tavoy, to assist Dr. Mason in his duties, with special reference to Karen literature, which the latter was carrying on alone, owing to the death of his colleague, Mr. Boardman.

Dr. Mason arrived at Tavoy in the end of January, 1831, just in time to witness Mr. Boardman's triumphant death.

"This lamented missionary," says Dr. Macgowan,† "was permitted to commence the work of evangelizing these wild men, but he fell early in the warfare, and closed his brief and useful career like an intrepid soldier on the field of conflict; borne on a cot to the margin of a majestic stream, he there witnessed the baptism of a large body of Karens, the first ingathering from that nation, took part in further ceremonies attending their reception into the Christian Church, and calmly expired, as it were in the arms of victory. A morally sublime scene."

After the close of the last war, resulting in the annexation of Pegu, the work which had begun so well in the Rangoon and Bassein districts, received a fresh impetus, and large missions were also established in the more northern districts.

It is beyond our province to enter into detailed information in reference to the work which is being carried on in Burmah; it will suffice to say that the efforts of the missionaries with the mild *Sgans* and *Pwos* in the Tenasserim provinces, and the alluvial

* "Gospel in Burmah," p. 49.

† "J. A. S. B.," vol. v, No. vi, 1851.

lands of Pegu, have since then been rewarded with continued success.

Under the protection of the British flag, the work has also progressed steadily and quietly, without exhibiting either the violent contrasts which are so characteristic of the experience of the Christian missions under the Burmese *régime*, or without affording prominent points to attract the notice of the general reader.

The marvellous results of missionary efforts among the inveterate Caterans of the hilly districts in Toungoo, who from their heights bade proud defiance to their quasi rulers, and who were supposed to be so wild and so untamable as to be utterly irreclamable, deserve, however, more than a passing notice.

Quoting from a minute by the Chief Commisioner of British Burmah, dated 1st May, 1863, we find that "the district of Toungoo was occupied by British troops early in 1853. In the autumn of that year, the Rev. Dr. Mason and Mrs. Mason came to the district, as also did the Karen minister the Rev. San-Qua-la, and immediately commenced mission work among the Karens, near the city of Toungoo.

"At that time nearly the whole of the Karen tribes on the mountains east of Toungoo, that is, over an area of more than 2,000 square miles, were in a savage state. The Burmese Government never had authority over any of the tribes living more than a day's journey from the city and river.

"In process of time, from the constant labour of the above-mentioned missionaries, many thousand of the mountain Karens were instructed in Christianity,

had abandoned their savage mode of life, and their cruel wars, and lived as Christian men and women." And further on he records a graceful testimony to the value of the labours of these worthy pioneers of civilisation and religious enlightenment, in the following terms: "I have had ample opportunity personally of observing and of learning from former cases as well as the present, what the Rev. Dr. and Mrs. Mason have done for the Karen mountaineers in the Toungoo district. They found them in a state of savage barbarism. There are now twenty-five thousand of them either Christians, or under Christian influence and teaching. They found them split up into tribes and clans, warring against each other, and taking captives to sell as slaves. Wherever the Gospel has been spread such acts no longer prevail. They have ceased not only amongst Christian tribes, but also among the heathen tribes, except those on the extreme border.

"Now, I confidently attest that this great and beneficial change has been accomplished mainly, indeed almost entirely, by the labours of Dr. and Mrs. Mason, and of the Karen minister, San-Qua-la. I assert, from long experience among similar tribes, that such results could not be obtained by the Civil Administration, unaided by missionary teaching."

Dr. Mason, who had been labouring for more than twenty years in the Tenasserim provinces, became so enfeebled from ill health, that he was obliged to return to America to recruit his worn-out energies. Fully realising, however, the importance of introducing Christianity amongst the Karens of Toungoo, "who associated with the rule of the

'white foreigners' a time of prosperity and peace, and of enlightenment in the knowledge of the Eternal God," he made an effort to visit that ancient kingdom before he turned his face homewards.

The result of his labours was most encouraging; but when all seemed fairest and most hopeful, he was compelled to abandon what had been so well begun. At this juncture, however, a man after Dr. Mason's own heart, "eminently gifted with all the needful graces for proclaiming and establishing the Gospel," was raised up from the Karens. We allude to *San-Qua-la,** who was destined to perform as great a work among the turbulent hill tribes, as made the name of *Ko-tha-byn* famous as the "Karen Apostle" of the more southern districts.

San-Qua-la was prompted to visit Toungoo owing to the exhortations and representations of a Karen named *Dumoo,* who had come from the Toungoo district in search of his daughter, and who, after having been converted to Christianity, never ceased in his efforts and entreaties to stir up a missionary spirit among the pastors of Tavoy, in favour of his clansmen in the north. "The churches in the southern provinces were very unwilling to let San-Qua-la go, but it was in vain they endeavoured to detain him. A memorial, signed by every assistant south of Tavoy, and by the churches, remonstrating in affecting terms against the departure of one whose instructions were so much valued by them, was presented to the Association," but afterwards, with a

* For most of the information contained in our notice of San-Qua-la, we are indebted to Mrs. Wyllie's interesting book, "The Gospel in Burmah."

self-abnegation worthy of the high cause in which they took such a deep interest, the worthy Tavoyers consented to part with their "tried minister, not the mediocrity, but the most talented, best educated, most efficient, and most highly esteemed."

"San-Qua-la was the child of Karen parents, born and nurtured in one of the wildest of their mountain glens," but still within reach of the oppression which the Burmese, when opportunity offered, exercised over their race. They had long chafed under the bitterness of Burman wrongs, when reports reached them that "the white foreigners had come by sea to the Burmese ports, and believing that these white men were destined to be their deliverers, they began to look forward with hope to the day when their galling yoke would be broken, and the oppressed allowed to go free.

"It was about this time that their second child was born, and to him they gave the significant name of *Qualá*—'Hope,' because, they said, 'We hope happiness will come to us in his days.' It was no wonder that the boy should grow up with a thirst for liberty, or that he should treasure in his memory every tradition which prophesied of the emancipation of his nation from the Burman rule."

Their anticipations were realized, for when San-Qua-la was about fourteen or fifteen years old, the English took Tavoy, and by the kind treatment which they extended towards San-Qua-la's parents, and other Karens who visited the town, entirely won their confidence.

Two or three years after this *Ko-tha-byn* was baptized, and following out the natural impulse of

most of the converted Karens, proceeded at once to preach the Gospel to his countrymen ; and it so happened that the first house in which he proclaimed the message of mercy was that of Quala's father.

San-Qua-la was deeply affected by what he heard, and said to himself, " is not this the very thing we have been waiting for ? " His mother too embraced the truth ; his father, however, was so strongly opposed to the new religion, that his son became spiritless and disheartened for a time, but subsequently " he made a public profession of his faith, and was admitted into the Church of Christ by baptism," and not long after he was able to convince his unbelieving parent that he had chosen the right path.

From the time of his conversion to the end of his course, he held on steadfastly, and " by his unblemished Christian character won the respect, confidence, and affection of all connected with him."

San-Qua-la was an interested and sympathising spectator of that sublime scene when Mr. Boardman ceased from his earthly toil, for he was " amongst the number who carried that fading form to the little sequestered cove, where, beneath the shadow of the broad-leaved trees, he witnessed the baptism of thirty-four Karens, for whose salvation he had prayed and laboured," and afterwards consigned the body of his beloved pastor to its last resting place after the spirit had fled.

Few who had witnessed such a convincing proof of the vitality of religion as the death of Mr. Boardman afforded, could have remained unmoved, much less San-Qua-la, who was bound to him by the most sacred ties of affection and respect, and no doubt

what he had seen of and heard from the dying missionary must have made a lasting impression upon him.

From the opportunities which Dr. Mason had of observing the character of San-Qua la, he was convinced that he had no ordinary mind or heart; he accordingly kept him with him for awhile, and afterwards sent him to Moulmain to enable him to secure extra advantages in his education.

On his return to Tavoy, Dr. Mason employed him in committing to writing all the traditions in poetry and prose with which he was acquainted, as well as those he was able to collect from others.

Among these collections are the remarkable scriptural traditions, the publication of which has done so much towards exciting an intelligent interest in the Karens. He was also indebted to San-Qua-la for valuable assistance in translating the New Testament.

San-Qua-la had, as is the custom with some of the clans, been betrothed to a little girl when he was a child, and when they had grown up, one of the elders of his village, according to Karen usage, "was deputed to visit his betrothed to ascertain the nature of her feelings towards him." The only remark she made was, "Oh, yes! I love San-Qua-la amazingly, now he is baptized. Had he not been baptized I should not have loved him at all." This signified according to their mode of expression a decided rejection, and here their engagement ended, they never meeting again. This was fortunate for San-Qua-la, for he soon afterwards found a wife whose zeal and devotion in the missionary cause

were such as to greatly strengthen his hands, and afford a bright example of what a pastor's wife should be.

San-Qua-la had more than one opportunity of securing lucrative employment under Government, but his wife ever gave him her support and counsel in his determination not "to mix up God's work with Government work," a temptation to which some missionaries in the East are too apt to succumb, and thereby cause a reproach to be cast on the profession.

After accomplishing great results in Tenasserim, San-Qua-la proceeded to Toungoo in the end of 1853. In the following month he conducted the first ordinance of baptism in the presence of more than fifty Burmans, whom he addressed in a judicious and eloquent manner. Some English officers who were interested spectators of the scene, "were much gratified with the fearlessness, dignity, and propriety of the administrator."

Work begun in such a spirit merited and obtained success, for we find that at the close of that year there were 741 converts; in 1856 they had increased to 2,124, belonging to thirty churches, and year by year fresh accessions having been made to the Christian ranks, there is every hope that before long the impure faith that distinguishes these wild people will give way to a nobler one, enabling them to forget all their ancient feuds and differences, and become an undivided people, under the banner of Christ.

A very prominent characteristic of the Karen Mission, is that from the beginning, up to the present

time the work has been carried on mainly by the exertions of the people themselves. The missionaries, therefore, early realized the necessity of imparting a good education to those who were destined for the ministry, with the view of utilizing them more efficiently, and have accordingly instituted normal schools at the principal towns with this object. The most important of these institutions is the College at Rangoon, which has been for so many years presided over by the Rev. Dr. Binney.

San-Qua-la, and men like him, have not only been useful as evangelists, but have also done good work in assisting the officers of Government in civilising the people, and in ably carrying out with zeal and discretion many commissions with which they have been entrusted. San-Qua-la, when he accompanied Mr. O'Riley on more than one of his tours, was an example of this, and we could name several to whom we were indebted for valuable aid.

Their devotedness in the sacred cause which they have chosen is, however, their most distinguishing characteristic, for many of them leave their families far away, and itinerate for months at a time, often enduring much hardship and fatigue, with little or no emolument, and without food, excepting such as is given them where they labour.

After San-Qua-la had been working with Karen assistants for about three years, Mr. and Mrs. Whittaker went to aid them. The former was, however, but a short time there when he died after a career of usefulness which is still held in affectionate remembrance by the people.

Dr. and Mrs. Mason returned to Toungoo in 1857, and were welcomed by the Karens with the most fervent joy, and the work which had been so successfully inaugurated by San-Qua-la assumed such vast proportions as to cause the Toungoo Mission to be one of the most extraordinary in Christendom.

Messrs. Cross and Bixby joined the mission in 1860, and for a year or two all went well, when unfortunately misunderstandings arose owing to exceptions being taken by some of the missionaries to certain views propounded by one of their number, which caused a considerable scandal in the Church, as well as much sorrow to persons interested in the mission. This schism was the more deplorable as it caused much confusion among the converts in the Toungoo district.

Time has, however, somewhat allayed the bitter feelings evoked by the unfortunate affairs to which we allude, and it is hoped that by degrees they will have entirely abated, and enable the Christians to be an united brotherhood as before.

From the statistics of the Baptist Missionary Convention which met at Toungoo in November, 1870, we find that there were "18,860 church members belonging to the different mission stations in Burmah, reported to be of good standing."

For the same year the annual contributions for religious purposes were upwards of £1,900, and for schools, books, &c., upwards of £1,300, giving an aggregate of more than £3,200, contributed in one year by these poor people for religious and educational purposes, affording sufficient convincing evidence of the vitality of the religion they profess.

Of the genuineness of the conversion of the Karens, there is abundant evidence from a missionary as well as from a secular point of view, and there are not a few, who, although they ordinarily profess to discredit the alleged success of missionary efforts among the Burmese, Hindoos, Mahomedans, and other races, admit the wonderful results that have been achieved among the Karens.

When old and evil customs, such as distinguished the Karen race in its natural state of savage barbarism, have been suppressed by the teachings of a purer faith, even the most sceptical must allow that the missionaries have done good. Some writers argue that the mere contrast with a higher state of civilisation would have abolished them, without the necessity of any distinct religious teaching, and a notable proof of this is given in the success that attended the efforts of the celebrated Akbar, in extending towards the wild peoples of Central India, a firm and judicious policy, which "broke up the feudal system under which strong government and permanent improvement were impossible, and which merely insisting on nominal submission to his empire, with permission to administer their country after their own fashion, exercised such an influence over them as to give an impetus to the civilisation of these dark regions, and to put a stop to the lawlessness and strife which characterised them before the inauguration of his wise and beneficent rule."*

History again, in many instances, teaches us that the onward destiny which the white man assumes to

* Forsyth's "Central India," p. 9.

be special privilege Providence vouchsafes to his race, has also led to the moral and physical degradation as well as to the gradual extinction of the aborigines.

The Karens, especially the hill tribes, afford an instance of a people surrounded by nations whose claims to be considered within the pale of civilisation are indisputable, but who, under the Burmese Government, never did, or probably never would have emerged, from that state of social degradation which is characteristic of the tribes unaffected by Christian teaching.

Whether the more conciliatory policy that distinguishes the British Government in its dealings with wild peoples, could, if it relied simply on its own merits, have achieved the high results that have been attained in conjunction with the efforts of the missionaries, is a problem which it would be difficult to solve, even were it incumbent on us to endeavour to do so, and we may, therefore, rest content with giving the benefit of the evidence of fact in favour of these worthy pioneers of civilisation.

As far as we can judge, we have no hesitation in saying, that the Karens, as a rule, seem to appreciate the beauties of Christianity for its own sake, and to recognize the necessity of leading a new life to a greater extent than any converts we are acquainted with, either in India or in the Transgangetic provinces.

We believe, and the missionaries will, we think, bear us out in this, that there is here and there a considerable falling off from the extraordinary high standard attained when the saving truths of Christianity were first divulged by the Karen

Apostles *Ko-tha-byn*, and *San-Qua-la*, but as it is not unusual to find that re-action ensues after those religious revivals and sudden demonstrations that occasionally take place in Christian countries, it would be unreasonable if we were to find fault with the Karens for not rigidly acting up to first professions, resulting from an enthusiasm suddenly evoked under exceptional circumstances.

In reference to this people, it may with justice be conceded, that as regards a due appreciation of the duties incumbent on them as good Christians, and a conscientious discharge of the same, they compare favourably with Christian communities in more civilised countries, especially is this the case in the moral courage they evince in observing a "teetotalism" worthy of the strictest disciple of Father Matthew, and in their praise it must be admitted that, once having "taken the pledge," they, as a rule, adhere to it, and exemplify by their conduct an exception to the rule among other peoples, that chronic drunkenness is incurable.

Mr. Malcolm, to whom was entrusted the duty of reporting on the mission, testifies to the temperance of the Christians in the following terms:—

"The change in regard to temperance is not less remarkable. Unlike the Burmans, whose religion utterly forbids the use of strong drink, and who scarcely ever use it, the Karens use it universally and generally to excess. Every family make arrack for themselves, and from the oldest to the youngest partake. Drunkenness, with all its train of horrors, is rife among them, of course. But no sooner do any become serious inquirers, and consort with the

disciples for further instruction, than they totally abandon the 'accursed thing.'

"The children of the very men who were sots, are growing up without having tasted or seen it. The consequence to domestic peace and general welfare may be supposed."*

Even taken for granted that they are merely nominal Christians, it is much to say for their religion, that besides curing them of this debasing habit, it has induced them to abandon their bitter blood feuds, many of long standing, to refrain from their kidnapping and plundering forages, to give the open hand of fellowship (dirty though it be!) to their neighbour, instead of stroke of sword, or prick of spear, their normal greetings in ancient times; and to endeavour with a will to lead a new life, consistent with the teachings of the book brought by the "white men from the west."

Having given a short *résumé* of the rise and progress of Christianity among this interesting people, we now propose to devote a few pages to a brief notice of the religious traditions which have caused such a deep interest to be evinced in the Karen Mission, and which have tended to lighten the preliminary labours of missionaries among them.

These traditions coïncide so minutely with the biblical record, that in the opinion of Dr. Mason they must have been derived therefrom, "but the absence of anything Christian in all" he adds, "proves that they never had the New Testament among them, and that if derived from a written source, those tra-

* "The Karen Apostle," p. 88.

ditions must have come from the Old Testament alone."

The Karens too, are fully under the impression that in ancient times they had books of skin, in which was embodied the Word of God, containing instructions to make them wise unto salvation. These books, judging by a description given in a poetical fragment quoted by Dr. Mason, were similar to the old parchment records in use with the Jews and other nations before paper was known. They are referred to as follows :—

"The palm leaf book that is written in circles.

"The book of palm leaf that in circles is written.

"The elders drew out the lines in long coils ;

"They became great winding paths ;

"The letters of the palm leaf books teach ancient wonders ;

"The pages of the palm leaf books show wonders of antiquity.

"God sent us the book of skin ;

"It is at the feet of the King of Hades ;

"God sent us the book that has neither father nor mother,

"Enabling every one to instruct himself.

"The book of one sided letters, the letters ten,

"Is at the feet of the King of Hades ;

"The book of one sided letters, of letters many,

"All men could not read."

The "one sided letters" referred to in these stanzas further bear out this assumption, for we find that copies of the Pentateuch obtained by missionaries from Jews in *Khai-fung-fu* in China, are described as "beautifully written without points or

marks of divisions on white sheep skins, cut square and sewed together about twenty yards long, and rolled on sticks."*

Although the use of skins for writing purposes has become obsolete among the Karens and the other Indo-Chinese races with which we are acquainted, we learn from Chinese authority that so late as the 14th century "their neighbours, the Cambodians, wrote their books and public records on skins dyed black, and used pencils composed of a paste resembling lime, which made indelible impressions."†

The idea entertained by many, that the Karens are indebted either to the Jews or Nestorians for their Scriptural traditions, appears reasonable; for the Jewish religion was, as we know, introduced into China in the Han Dynasty, or between 200 B.C., and 226 A.D.,‡ while the Nestorians arrived in China about 629 A.D.,§ or the same year that the celebrated pilgrim *Hiouen Thsang* set out for India, and we find from Colonel Yule, that at the time of Marco Polo's visit, and in the preceding centuries, the Nestorian Church "was diffused over Asia to an extent of which little conception is generally entertained, having a chain of bishops and metropolitans from Jerusalem to Peking."‖

We may here conveniently quote a few of the most remarkable of the traditions to which we refer. The resemblance of some of these with the accounts

* Mason's "Burmah," p. 74.

† Dr. Macgowan, "Journ. Ind. Arch.," vol. v, No. 6.

‡ Yule's "Marco Polo."

§ Beal's "Fahian," pp. 34, 38. Introduction.

‖ Yule's "Marco Polo," p. 58, n.

in the Bible is so startling that not a few are sceptical as to their alleged antiquity, although they fully appreciate the discriminating tact and critical acumen evinced by Dr. Mason in sifting the wheat from the immense amount of chaff to be found in the Karen traditions.

Creation.—In reference to the creation of the world, the Red Karen's tradition after stating that "God was before all things," records that "He formed first the heavens, a dwelling place for himself, and then he created the earth; but the earth was mixed with water and there was no solid ground.

"Then God divided the land from the water, and made the water to gather itself together in one place in the great ocean, when the dry land appeared.

"In ancient times God created the world; all things were minutely ordered by Him. In ancient times God created the world. He has power to enlarge and power to diminish.

"God created the world formerly: He can enlarge and diminish it at pleasure.

"God created the world formerly: He appointed food and drink."

Another version,—

"God created heaven and earth.

"The creation of heaven and earth was finished.

"He created the sun. He created the moon. He created the stars. The creation of the sun, the moon and the stars was finished. He created again —man; and of what did He create man? He created man at first from the earth. The creation of man was finished.

"He created a woman. How did He create a woman? He took a rib out of the man and created a woman. The creation of woman was finished.

"He created again life. How did He create life? Father God said,—'In respect to my son and daughter, I love them; I will give them my great life.' He took a little piece of his life, breathed into the nostrils of the two persons, and they came to life and were real human beings. The creation of man was finished.

"He created again food and drink. He created rice. He created water. He created fire. He created cows. He created elephants. He created birds. The creation of animals was finished."

Garden of Eden.—We now come to the Garden of Eden and the commands of God to our first parents when He placed them therein.

"Father God said, 'My son and daughter, your Father will make and give you a garden. In the garden are seven different kinds of trees, bearing seven different kinds of fruits; among the seven one tree is not good to eat. Eat not of its fruit; if you eat you will become old, you will die. Eat not. All I have created I give to you. Eat and drink with care. Once in seven days I will visit you. All I have commanded you observe and do. Forget me not. Pray to me every night and morning.'"

Temptation and Fall.—With reference to the following traditions on the Temptation and Fall, which is perhaps the most extraordinary of all, Dr. Mason remarks, "'it is worthy of observation that had it been a modern composition, Adam would not have been *Thanai* nor Eve *E-u*, but *A-wa*, as

written by both Protestant and Catholic missionaries in Burmah."

"Anciently God commanded, but Satan appeared bringing destruction. Formerly God commanded, but Satan appeared deceiving unto death.

"The woman E-u and the man Thanai pleased not the eye of the dragon.

"The dragon looked on them—the dragon beguiled the woman and Thanai.

"How is this said to have happened?

"The great dragon succeeded in deceiving—deceiving unto death.

"How do they say it was done?

"A yellow fruit took the great dragon, and gave to the children of God.

"A white fruit took the great dragon, and gave to the daughter and son of God.

"They transgressed the commands of God, and God turned away from them.

"They kept not all the words of God—were deceived, deceived unto sickness.

"They kept not all the law of God—were deceived, deceived unto death."

Another version,—

"O children and grandchildren! in the beginning, God, to try man, whether he would or would not observe His commands, created the tree of death and the tree of life, saying concerning the tree of death, 'Eat not of it.' He wished to see whether man believed; not believing, he ate of the fruit of the tree of death, and the tree of life God hid. Because the tree of life has been hidden, men have died since that time."

"Temptation, temptation, the fruit of temptation.
"The fruit of temptation fell on the ground,
"The fruit of temptation was bad,
"It poisoned to death our mother;
"The fruit of temptation, 'Do thou eat it not.'
"In the beginning it poisoned to death our father and mother.
"The tree of death came by woman,
"The tree of life by man!"

They have other prose as well as poetical accounts, one of which enters more into detail. These remarkable examples are, however, sufficient to illustrate their traditions on this subject.

Curse.—The result of disobeying the commands of God is described as follows:—

"The day after they had eaten, early in the morning God visited them, but they did not (as they had been wont to do) follow him singing praises.

"He approached them and said, 'Why have you eaten the fruit of the tree that I commanded you not to eat?' They did not dare to reply, and God cursed them. 'Now you have not observed what I commanded you;' he said, 'the fruit that is not good to eat, I told you not to eat; but you have not listened, and have eaten, therefore you shall become old, you shall be sick, and you shall die."

Angels.—Although in the indigenous belief of the Karens their idea in regard to angels is rather confused, their traditions teach them to believe that there are beings in Heaven who have never sinned, and that they are employed in executing God's purposes.

"The sons of Heaven are powerful,
"They sit by the seat of God;
"The sons of Heaven are righteous,
"They dwell together with God;
"The sons of Heaven are good,
"They lean against the silver seat of God.

"The beings whom God employs to execute his purposes have to the present time the reclining place of God."

Satan.—The same may be said in reference to their notions about Satan.

"Satan in ancient times was righteous,
"But he transgressed the commands of God;
"Satan in ancient times was holy,
"But he departed from the love of God;
"And God drove him away.
"He deceived the daughter and son of God,
"And God drove you away,
"You deceived of the daughters and sons of God.

"O children and grandchildren! though we were to kill Satan he would not die, but when the time of our salvation comes God will kill him. Because that time has not yet arrived he still exists."

The following may be accepted as having some reference to an universal deluge, but it is not so marked as some of the other traditions.

"It thundered, tempests followed. It rained three days and three nights, and the waters covered all the mountains."

Again—"Anciently, when the earth was deluged with water, two brothers finding themselves in a difficulty, got on a raft. The waters rose and rose till they reached to Heaven; when seeing a mango

tree hanging down, the younger brother climbed up it and ate; but the waters suddenly falling left him in the tree."

Dispersion of Men.—The story of the bamboo bucket divided among seven brothers who separated and afterwards became separate peoples, which we have noticed in our chapter on origin, may have some indistinct allusion to the dispersion of nations.

One of their traditions also says—

"O children and grandchildren! men had at first one father and mother; but, because they did not love each other, they separated. After their separation they did not know each other, and their language became different, and they became enemies to each other and fought."

Resurrection.—Confused and contradictory as the Karens' ideas are in regard to a future state, we may quote the following tradition in regard to the resurrection:—

"O children and grandchildren! you think the earth large. The earth is not so large as Entada bean. When the time arrives people will be more numerous than the leaves of the trees, and those who are now unseen will then be brought to view. O, my children, there will not be a hiding-place for a single thing on earth."

"The Karens," says Dr. Mason, "explain this by saying that the earth is only as large as a bean when compared with the whole of God's works. Concerning the numerous people that are to appear they confess their ignorance, but think that the inhabitants of Hades (the invisible or lower world) are intended, whom God will cause to come up upon the earth."

Dr. Mason gives translations of many of their moral precepts in reference to love to God, prayer, idolatry, filial piety, love to enemies, with admonitions against murder, robbery, adultery, false swearing, &c., which are identical with the precepts derived from the Scriptures, from which we quote the following :—

Precepts—Love to God.—"O children and grandchildren! love God, and never so much as mention his name; for, by speaking his name, He goes farther and farther from us."

Repentance and Prayer.—"O children and grandchildren! if we repent of our sins, and cease to do evil, restraining our passions, and pray to God, He will have mercy upon us again. If God does not have mercy upon us there is no other one that can. He who saves us is the only one God."

Idolatry.—"O children and grandchildren! do not worship idols or priests; if you worship them you obtain no advantage thereby, and increase your sins exceedingly."

Giving Alms.—"O children and grandchildren! give food and drink to the poor; and, by so doing, you will obtain mercy yourselves."

It will be found that many of the most prominent incidents in the Bible have been paralleled by traditions which have been asserted to exist among various nations, and which have often been brought forward in proof of certain conclusions, such as the universality of the deluge, and the unity of the human race.

In this instance they are adduced in support of a much less important hypothesis, and if there

was a possibility of sifting these traditions, it would probably be found that they are not so ancient as they are supposed to be; since, among nations without a written language, the origin of anything is very soon forgotten.

Some argue that as the imaginations of the Karens are uninventive, the few traditions of antiquity that they possess have been remembered more faithfully, handed down more or less intact, and are therefore more reliable, and "conservation," as remarked by Mr. Logan, "is the most powerful principle in isolated and exclusive communities. The sole form of nationality in lower ethnic stages."*

But as all rude nations, like children, have a tendency to re-echo stories that have made a vivid impression on their imaginations, it is possible that some of the tales that have been registered as ancient traditions do not really go back so very far.

For, as some writers suggest, they may have been simply mythical accounts of common local events, such as a great flood, a revolution and consequent dispersion of the weak by the strong. Independent natural beliefs, and sheer accident, may further have contributed to those resemblances in tradition which are so much relied on.

The history of the Baptist Mission in Burmah teaches us, say others, that a period of twenty years elapsed between the first arrival of Protestant Missionaries, and those who devoted themselves to the study of the Karen language, and that, as in this interim, the Missionaries appear to have been almost

* "Journ. Ind. Arch.," vol. ii, No. 4, of 1857.

entirely dependent on Burmese interpreters in their communications with the Karens, and the accounts received from this source are more or less untrustworthy; for, they argue, the Burman from his proneness to involuntary exaggeration, and his natural politeness which induces him to accommodate his information to what he knows to be the desires of the recipients, is not as a general rule to be relied on in matters of this kind. For granted that he be honest as the sun, say they, it may happen that expecting or wishing to find legends of which he is in search, he may jump too rapidly to conclusions, on finding certain accidental resemblances, and, by leading questions, obtain what are said to be traditions.

While agreeing in the main with this estimate of Burman character, we have every reason to rely on the tact and discretion of the earnest and thoughtful men who first gave attention to this subject, as well as to believe that the unquestionable honesty that characterises them would have prompted them to modify their previous statements, if subsequent inquiry suggested such a course.

Sympathizing as we do with the missionaries, these remarks will not, we trust, be interpreted into a captious spirit on our part. We confess it would give us much pleasure to be convinced of the authenticity of the various traditions, the importance of which in an ethnological sense, if in no other, are apparent; but the more valid the conclusions sought to be arrived at, the more desirable it is that they should be supported by unquestionable testimony, hence we acknowledge the propriety of proceeding with reasonable caution before accepting as evidence,

traditions which may have only a fanciful resemblance to well-known events to recommend them.

The Karens, say the elders, through carelessness lost their books, and with their books they lost their knowledge of God, and, consequently, deteriorated socially as well as morally.

Degraded, however, as they were destined to become, a hope was held out to them of deliverance, if they were not enticed away by false prophets, who were to arise and endeavour to deceive many before the Word of God should come to them.

Their traditions teach them that "God created man holy like himself, but that man fell from his state of holiness into a state of sin and misery, by eating the forbidden fruit through the temptation of Satan, but that God has promised to restore man to his favour."*

This knowledge, or Word of God, they were further taught to believe, was in the possession of the white foreigners, who would come from the West, and the faithful were therefore exhorted to look towards the ocean for their saviours.

That a nation, oppressed as the Karens have been, should have traditions promising deliverance from their oppressors, is perfectly natural, and if the story regarding the advent of the white foreigners be genuine, the coincidence with similar stories in China, Siam, and Mexico, is, to say the least, very remarkable.

We may here embody a few extracts from an unpublished address to the Governor-General of

* "Gospel in Burmah," p. 72.

India, written by San-Quala, exhibiting the anticipations of the Karens on this subject.

"Great Ruler! The ancestors of the Karens charged their posterity thus :—

"Children and grandchildren! if the thing come by land, weep; if by water, laugh; it will not come in our days but it will in yours. If it come first by water, you will be able to take breath; but if first by land, you will not find a spot to dwell in. Hence, when the Karens were in the midst of their intense sufferings, they longed for those that were to come by water, to come first.

"Again, the Elders said, when the Karens have cleared the Hornbill city* three times, happiness will arrive. So when the Burman rulers made them clear it the last time, they said among themselves, 'Now we may suppose that happiness is coming, for this completes the third time of clearing the Hornbill city;' and true enough, before they had finished, we heard that the white foreigners had taken Rangoon.

"After this, we heard that the foreigners had taken possession (of Tavoy) and that those who wished to go to the city had liberty. Then the Karens rejoiced and said, 'Now happiness has arrived. The thing has come by water, now we can take breath;' and those that were concealed returned to their homes with their wives and little ones."

On looking at the white foreigners, he was reminded of the words of one of their prophets, who sang :—

* The site of an old city near Tavoy.

"The sons of God, the white foreigners,
Dress in shining black and shining white,
The white foreigners, the children of God,
Dress in shining black and shining red."

"We had never seen white foreigners before; but we had heard the Elders say, 'as to the white foreigners they are righteous. They were the guides of God anciently, so God blessed them, and they sailed in ships and cutters and came across oceans and lands."

The Elders further sang:—

"The sons of God, the white foreigners,
Obtained the Word of God;
The white foreigners, the children of God,
Obtained the Word of God anciently."

Before the arrival of the white foreigners a prophet singing, said:—

"Great Mother comes by sea,
Comes with purifying water, the head water,
The teacher comes from the horizon,
He comes to teach the little ones."

Hence not a few of the Karens believed.

The Mexicans believe that the Bible the "white people have was once theirs, that while they had it they prospered exceedingly, but that the white people bought it of them and learnt many things from it, while the Indians lost their credit, offended the Great Spirit, and suffered exceedingly from the neighbouring nations."*

Again, we find from Dr. Mason, that when Gutslaff, the first Protestant missionary to Siam,

* Mrs. Simon's "Ten Tribes of Israel," p. 191.

reached Bankok, his appearance "spread a general panic, as it was well known from the predictions of the Pali books, that a certaim religion of the West would vanquish Buddhism."*

And "Buddhism," he goes on to say, "was introduced into China in the first century, because the Emperor dreamed that the 'Holy One, of whom the ancient native odes had made mention, was born in the West,' and the messengers that he sent in search of him, first met with Buddhist priests, where they ought to have found Christian missionaries."

This assertion is identical with the account embodied in Schlegel's "Philosophy of History," from which we learn "that the Chinese so vividly expected the Messiah's advent, the Great Saint, who, as Confucius states, was to appear in the West, that about sixty years after the birth of our Saviour, they sent their envoys to hail their expected Redeemer."

These envoys encountered on their way the missionaries of Buddhism coming from India; the latter announcing an incarnate God were taken to be the disciples of the true Christ, and were presented as such to their countrymen by the deluded ambassadors."†

This story, says Mr. Beale, is without foundation in Buddhist records, and in reference to the Emperor's vision, he remarks that "there appears to be no authority for the explanation given by the early Christian missionaries that its interpretation was connected with the supposed saying of Confucius, that the 'Holy man is in the West.'"‡

* Mason's "Burmah," p. 77.

† Beale's "Fahian," notes, p. lxxii. ‡ Ibid., p. xxi.

Be this as it may, and leaving it an open question as to the origin of the Karen tradition, it served with other articles of belief among them, to prepare the people to accept the truths of Christianity without that suspicion which is so characteristic of the race, in regard to other innovations which have been introduced among them, and has mainly helped to place the Karen Mission in the high place it deservedly fills.

This mission field is worthy of large sympathy, inasmuch as the people themselves support their numerous native evangelists and teachers, build their own chapels and schools, and also subscribe towards the general expenses of the mission.

Many of these who, within the last quarter of a century, and less, have been reclaimed from savage barbarism, now live as quiet industrious people, anxious for improvement.

Christianity has indeed wrought a vast change in the habits, the feelings, and the hearts of the Karens, for in many of the villages where strangers dared not enter while the people were engaged in sacrificing to the demons, or in other heathenist rites; the chapel bell or gong now daily tolls a glad welcome to all comers to join in prayer and praise to the living God.

Christianity has made rapid strides wherever it has been firmly established, radiating towards all points and achieving such marvellous success as to cause the Karen Mission to be recognized as one of the most important and the most interesting in the world, and gives promise that before many years, the hideous demons of superstition, mistrust, and

ignorance will be banished by its efforts, and allow the glorious tidings brought the Karens, to sink as deeply in the heart of the nation, as was the case with our own ancestors when they received the same message from St. Augustine.

In this rough sketch we have necessarily given a prominent place to the work of the American Baptist Missionaries, who were the pioneers in this noble work, and who, as it were, have borne "the burden and heat of the day;" but we do not the less appreciate the zeal and devotion with which the Roman Catholic Missionaries followed in their footsteps in promoting the cause of civilisation and religious enlightenment among the Karens in many parts of the country, which before were steeped in ignorance and savagery.

These earnest and worthy men, who carry out their appointed work in the most secluded places, with a self-denial truly surprising, convey to our minds in that respect the apostolic idea to a greater degree than missionaries of any other persuasion.

We have purposely resisted the temptation of adverting to the rise and progress of Christianity among the Burmese, in which the exertions of Roman Catholic Missionaries deservedly hold a prominent place, as it is manifestly beyond the scope of this work.

Col. McMahon Del

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TOUNGOO. VIEW OF KAREN SETTLEMENT.

CHAPTER IX.

Toungoo, its Physical Geography and History.

Two hundred miles or so to the north-east of the flourishing city of Rangoon, lies the small town of Toungoo, which, from its inaccessibility some years ago, enjoyed the unenviable distinction of being farther away, in point of time, from the General Post Office of London than any other place in British possessions having postal communication.

It is still known in official records under its old Pali designation of *ketumati, i.e.*, "possessed of the Royal Standard," but more generally as Toungoo on *promontorium*; a name, however appropriate to the ancient capital of Zeyawatana, is singularly inapplicable to the present town which is situated on a plain.

Toungoo, which derives its only importance now from being the head-quarters of the frontier district of the same name, was celebrated a century or more ago as the royal residence of a line of kings who extended their conquests over Pegu, Burmah proper, Arakan, and Siam.

Insignificant as it now is, history teaches us that, in the beginning of the 16th century, it was the royal residence of a Sovereign who extended his conquests over Ava, Mogoung, Zuninay, the west

of Yunan and other adjoining states, in remembrance of whose glorious achievements, the title of *Htsen-byn-mya-shin*, or "Lord of many White Elephants," by which he was known is, to this day, retained by the Kings of Burmah, and the splendour of whose court made Pegu famous in Europe, as an empire of fabulous magnificence, and went far to bear out the title of Aurea Chersonesus, bestowed on this part of the world by the ancients.

The ruins of the ancient city walls and fosse, five miles in circumference, the golden palace, and royal lakes, constructed at the behest of its despotic rulers, by the enforced labour of thousands, still exist; but little vestige of their former glory remains to tell the tale.

Although its ancient glories have departed, it is, nevertheless, the centre of a district eminently interesting to the ethnologist and philologist, as well as to the lover of botany and geology; and, as many of the least known tribes of whom we are about to write, have their habitat therein, a short description thereof seems desirable.

Toungoo—Physical Geography.

The district of Toungoo is bounded on the north by Burmah proper, from which it is divided by a line of pillars; on the east by lofty mountains known as the Watershed, between the Salwen and Sittang rivers; on the south by the *Showé-gyen* and Rangoon districts respectively, and on the west by the Pegu Yoma range. It comprises four townships and twenty-five circles.

The district is of very irregular shape. Its greatest length is on the west, extending over 150 miles. It varies much in breadth. Between 18° and 19° 30′ lat., it is of an almost uniform width of about 82 miles, and for all practical purposes may be said to be divided by the river Sittang; it then suddenly contracts to nearly half that breadth for about twenty miles, having the Sittang at its boundary on the east.

The surface of the country is most varied, but is chiefly hilly. Right through the centre of the upper portion of the district, and to east of the middle portion, runs the alluvial valley of the Sittang. It is hemmed in to the east of the river by the innumerable spurs of the Poungloung Mountains, and has an average breadth of not more than five miles, while on the west it stretches a distance of some twenty miles, till it reaches the Yoma range, or is intercepted here and there by offshoots therefrom.

This valley contains the only champaign land in the district. It is more or less cultivable, and many parts are well adapted for rice and other cereals, as well as for miscellaneous cultivation.

The Sittang river, rising near Yeme, then flows generally in a southern direction through the district, but its tortuous course, not inaptly likened to the writhings of a wounded snake, frequently deviates to every point in the compass in a distance of a few miles. In the monsoon it rises from 18 to 24 feet, and is then navigable for steamers of considerable draught. It has several affluents, insignificant when compared with the parent river, but important inasmuch as they develope the natural resources the

district possesses in its valuable teak forests and other products.

The largest of these streams is *Thouk-yay-gat*, which rises in latitude 19° 28′ on the great Watershed between which and the Poungloung ranges it flows southwards for some miles; and then, taking a western course, empties its waters into the Sittang about five miles below Toungoo.

Fed as it is by numerous perennial streams flowing from their inexhaustible reservoirs in the mountains, it is comparatively little affected by the extreme draught in the hot weather, and its waters are always clear, cool, and refreshing.

It derives its present name from a King of Pagan having drunk water from it, and originally bore the romantic appellation of "emerald stream," from the greenish hue of its waters. It is an outlet for a considerable quantity of teak (*opea odorata*), canes, mats, bamboos, sessamum, &c.

There are three mountain ranges in the district running parallel to each other, and the Sittang river. The Pegu Yomas, the Poungloung, and the Great Watershed.

The Yomas, although from their geographical position better known than the other two, look dwarfed when compared with the Poungloung range within a few miles to the east of the river, but both sink into insignificance before the Great Watershed mountains, looming in all their massive grandeur fifty miles to the east, with glorious "Nattoung," their captain, a very "Triton amongst minnows," proudly lifting up his bald and hoary head 8,000 feet above the sea, and towering above a

succession of smaller ranges of every conceivable size and shape, that lie between himself and his big brethren to the north and the Poung Wung range.

There is much valuable timber in the district; the produce of the teak forests forming an important item of revenue.

They are situated for the most part on the mountain ranges to the east and west, or on their spurs: the richest both in quality and quantity having their habitat to the west. The area covered by teak forests may be roughly estimated at 300 square miles.

The Yoma range, according to the geological note in William's map of Pegu, is composed of brown or grey slate clay, with thin layers of bituminous limestone, containing fossil ostraceous remains, frequently alternating with, and entering into, beds of argillaceous sandstone, generally soft and friable, although stiff and hard in places. In the higher ranges the sandstone is indurated, and assumes a basaltic character. Resting on and overlaying the slate clay and sandstone, and folding round the base of the high hills, is a base of laterite.

"On leaving the alluvial lands of the river," says Dr. Mason, "and proceeding east, the first high land met is found to be formed of beds of laterite; going farther eastward, limestone appears, and beyond that, slate and sandy shales; but their precise condition with the limestone has not been noted. The limestone is supposed to be above the slate. Beyond the slate, granite rocks appear, and are found continuously to '*Nattoung*;' but in the valley of the Salwen, north of Nattoung, all the rocks that

show themselves are limestone, forming high hills and grotesque crags, like the limestone in the valley above *Moulmain*, and seem to be of the same age."

The valley of the Sittang is almost exclusively occupied by Burmese villages; the agriculturists having their habitations near their fields, while the banks of the river and streams are chosen by those whose occupations are various.

The bold and rugged heights of the granite mountains to the east, the slopes of the *Yoma* range, or the deep gorges that form the beds of perennial streams, are adopted by the Karens for their dwelling-places.

History of Toungoo.

Toungoo, or the capital of the ancient kingdom of *Zeyawatana*, from which the present town derives its name, is of great antiquity.

Three separate histories, written in Burmese on palm leaves, for which we were indebted to the courtesy of some learned monks, who placed their libraries at our disposal, agree in stating that *Dumma-Athawka*, or the Great *Asoka*, Emperor of Hindustan, sent for the Chiefs of Toungoo, in the year 326 B.C., and, on their presenting themselves before him five years afterwards, gave them certain sacred relics of *Gaudama*, the last Buddha, instructing them at the same time to enshrine them in temples, which were to be built and completed during an eclipse of the moon, which occurred soon afterwards. Materials and workmen were accordingly in readiness at the appointed time, and determining to carry out Asoka's instructions to the letter, the chiefs con-

tented themselves with building four miniature pagodas, so as to have them finished before the shadow had left the moon's surface. Two of these, called *Kyouk-souk-mōk-tau*, were erected in a place about twenty miles to the west of Toungoo; and two others, called *Myat-saw-nyee-noung*, near our halting-place.

Prior to Asoka's alleged mission, and for some fifteen centuries afterwards, the palm-leaf records are blank, and we are led to infer that the country fell into great decay, and that when *Nara-pudee-thee-thoo*, the King of *Pagan*, having heard of these little pagodas, came to worship them in 1191 A.D., he found the country a wilderness, and the pagodas in ruins. He accordingly repaired the latter, and made them thirty cubits in height; and considering the country a fine one, and easily developed, he appointed *Nandathoorya*, a favourite minister, its governor.

After this event, the Burmese chronicles afford more or less authentic intelligence of its history till the occupation by the English.

Nandathoorya soon after died, and was succeeded by his son *Menhla-saw*, of whom there is nothing particular on record.

His son, *Thawonletya*, removed his residence on the left banks of *Swa Khoung*, about twenty-five miles north of Toungoo. Population increased, and the country continued very prosperous till 1256, A.D., when *Wariru*, King of Martaban, attacked the city, took the governor captive, and placed him in a village called *Byoo*, about fourteen miles south of Showé-gyen.

Thawonletya had two sons, *Thawongyee* and

Thawongnay. When he was very old, he enjoined them, after his death, not to remain in the Talaing kingdom, but to proceed to *Zeyawatana*, and build a city on ruins they would find on a large affluent of the Sittang, like the Sittang itself. They ascended the river in 1278 A.D., and mistaking their father's directions, went up the *Kaboung* stream instead of the *Swa*, and finding the ruins of a town near its source on the spur of a mountain, built a town, which they called Toungoo, afterwards Little Toungoo, 1279 A.D.

As there was little room there for a large city, they went over to Karen Myo, or Karen town, founded, according to some authorities, by a Burman nicknamed *Karenba*, or Karen's father, because, having lost his own children, he had adopted a Karen child, but who, Dr. Mason states, was undoubtedly a Karen. The two brothers and *Karenba* made a treaty of friendship, and searching the country for a suitable place, pitched on Great Toungoo, or *Dinyawadee*, which was built 1299 A.D.

According to this treaty *Thawongyee* became king, *Thawongnay* heir apparent, and *Karenba* prime minister. *Thawongnay* had his brother murdered when on a pilgrimage to some pagodas on the Sittang river, 1317 A.D., and the place where he was killed is to this day called *Noung-byin-seik*. He then usurped the Government, and died of fever after a seven years' reign. He left an infant son, whose mother conspired to kill *Karenba*, fearing he would kill her child. The latter finding out her schemes, killed her as well as her child, and ruled till 1342 A.D., when he died. He was succeeded by

his son-in-law, whose younger brother wrested the Government from him after he had reigned two years, and he in turn was deposed after a reign of two years by *Theimaka*.

Theimaka had no royal blood in his veins, but was chosen as *Karenba's* prime minister on account of his great abilities. On his accession he sent ambassadors to Ava, Pegu, Siam, and other countries with presents, and having ensured their goodwill by these means, his own country enjoyed tranquillity for the 17 years of his reign. He died in 1363 A.D. His son *Pyau-Khyee-gyee*, who was then on a visit to the King of Pegu, came up at once and succeeded him. He is described as very pious. He, however, gave offence to the Kings of Prome and Ava on account of his entering into a treaty of friendship with the King of Pegu. At first they intended to attack him, but finding he was reinforced by 3,000 men from Pegu, they resorted to stratagem on coming to the conclusion that they were not strong enough to conquer him. Accordingly, they sent ambassadors with a friendly letter suggesting that arrangements might be made to join all the three kingdoms together, making him emperor, and with an invitation for him to go to Prome to arrange for a marriage between his son and the King of Prome's daughter. He went to Prome accordingly, but was treacherously waylaid and murdered by the King of Prome's people. His son *Pyau-Khyee-gnay* and his son-in-law escaped to Toungoo, where they found that *Nga-Tsein* (who had been appointed regent) had usurped the throne. They won over the people of Toungoo to their interests three months after

their return, and caused *Nga-Tsein* to be killed. *Pyau-Khyee-gnay* began to reign 1370 A.D., and was succeeded by his brother-in-law *Tsokaday*. Tsokaday was at war with all the neighbouring kings, and on bad terms with his own subjects. He was slain by *Phoungyee*, who proclaimed himself king in 1378 A.D.

Phoungyee entered into treaties with the Kings of Ava and Pegu. The arts prospered in his peaceful reign, and an impetus was given to works of public utility. Soon after his accession he started with the intention of paying a visit to the King of Ava, but had only gone part of the way when he heard from his queen, whom he had left behind as his *locum tenens*, that his Shan subjects had rebelled. He accordingly at once returned and caused the Shans to be massacred. He died 1392 A.D., and was succeeded by his son. The latter had only enjoyed the throne a year when, in some unaccountable way, the King of Ava, taking advantage of his youth, appointed *Nay-mee* King of Toungoo, who reigned ten years, and was succeeded in 1403 A.D. by Prince *Goungyee*.

His first act on assuming the reins of Government was to have some Shans massacred. The reason of this severity is not recorded. He reigned judiciously at first, and the country and arts prospered; but when he grew old and childish the people, fearing he would not be able to cope with the Talaings and other neighbours, deposed him and appointed *Thenkaya* king in 1406 A.D. The latter reigned four years, and was succeeded by his son and namesake in 1410 A.D. He was murdered by the Shans in 1411.

The Prince of Padoung succeeded *Thenkaya*, whether by the suffrages of the people or by usurpation on his part is not stated. He was noted for his wisdom and charitable disposition. He paid a visit to the King of Ava according to promise, and was so annoyed with the want of respect shown to him on his reception, that on returning to Toungoo he declared war with that king, and conquered several of his tributary states in 1418. He also made an alliance with the King of Pegu, to whom he gave his daughter in marriage, and with an army of 20,000 foot, 1,000 horsemen, and 200 elephants, marched on Prome. The King of Pegu made a diversion in his favour by the Irrawaddy with 5,000 men in 700 boats. They took Prome and carried off much booty, amongst which was a white elephant, which, in some unaccountable way, they lost again. He died in 1427 from illness contracted out hunting after he had reigned 15 years.

The succeeding 30 years formed an uneventful period in the history of Toungoo; but, in 1458, we find that the King of Ava appointed *Zeyathora*, the governor of *Toungdwen*, as king, without prejudice to his former appointment; but distrusting him after he had reigned seven years, appointed the *Meaday* Prince, *Zayathengyau*, as his successor in 1465; but on the occasion of his death, some time afterwards, *Zayathengyau* threw off his allegiance to the throne of Ava. On this the then reigning sovereign sent an army consisting of eight regiments of foot, numbering 7,000 men, 6,000 cavalry, and 3,000 elephants, under the command of the heir apparent, to compel the King of Toungoo's homage. The latter sought

and obtained help from the King of Pegu; but in a pitched battle fought on the banks of the Kaboung creek, the allied forces were worsted and the Toungoo king taken prisoner. He was taken captive to Ava, subsequently pardoned and entrusted with the Government of two districts tributary to Ava.

Zaythoo Kyawden was proclaimed King of Toungoo in 1470. There is nothing to mark his reign. He was succeeded by his son in 1485, who was killed by *Mengyeenyo*, for failing in his promise of marrying his daughter.

Mengyeenyo usurped the Government, and acquitted himself so well, that the Kings of Pegu and Siam acknowledged his authority by sending him presents. He built the town of *Dwyawaddie*, now known as *Myo-gyee*, one of the present suburbs of Toungoo.

Owing to aggressions on the Talaing frontier, the King of Pegu sent an army against *Mengyeenyo*, which the latter signally defeated, and afterwards took the war into the enemy's country, achieving a brilliant victory over the Talaings. For this service the King of Ava gave him the title of *Zeyathoora*. He then threw off all show of allegiance to the King of Ava; and when the latter sent an army against him, he defeated it in three successive battles, and cut off the commander's head.

Zeyathoora built *Ketumati*, the present city of Toungoo, in 1510; 48,000 persons were employed in its construction. He also erected a splendid palace inside the walls, the ruins of which are now visible, and converted loathsome swamps into four ornamental lakes. Shortly after the city was built,

Naraputi, King of Ava, assisted by a Shan *Tsawba*, or Chief, made war on Toungoo, which was, however, so successfully defended by its king, that he completely routed the Burmese army. Zeyathoora died A.D. 1530, at the age of 72, after a reign of 46 years.

He was succeeded by his son, *Mentara Showé Htee*. This king invaded Pegu three times to no purpose, but was successful in his fourth attempt in 1537, when he conquered the country. The King of Pegu fled to his brother-in-law, the King of Prome, who obtained promises of aid from the King of Ava, the Shan States, and the King of Arakan (or Arracan).

Nothing daunted, *Mentara Showé Htee* attacked the King of Prome, and having utterly routed him, took possession of his territory in 1541. He also conquered Arakan in 1545; and flushed with success, it is said, he also had the temerity to attack and conquer Siam in 1548, and only refrained from annexing Ava and the Shan States because their rulers promised him allegiance. He died in 1549, after which the Peguans had a king of their own for some time. Before his death, on the occasion of his departure for Pegu, he gave the government of Toungoo to a Shan, who ruled wisely and well, and was beloved by his people. This Shan was succeeded by his younger son, *Theehathoo*, in 1548.

The elder son, *Hsen-mya-byoo Thin*, then at Pegu, wrested the government from his brother. After reigning two years, and having conquered Prome and Pegu, he removed to the latter, having left his brother as ruler of Toungoo. Before obtaining Toungoo, it should be stated, he built the fortified town of Zeyawaddie, about 31 miles south of

Toungoo, the ruins of which are now to be seen. He was called "Lord of many white elephants" (a title still retained by the King of Burmah), from having captured three white elephants when he conquered Siam. He died in 1584, and was succeeded by his son, who entered into a treaty of friendship with the King of Arakan in 1598. After his uncle's death he threw off all allegiance to the Talaings, and invaded Pegu. The heir apparent of Pegu placed himself under his protection, and as the kings on both sides were near relations, matters were amicably settled, the Toungoo king being acknowledged ruler over the Talaing kingdom as well as Toungoo, and the Talaing king taking up his residence at Toungoo.

In 1599, the King of Siam made a diversion in favour of the King of Pegu, by surrounding the town of Toungoo with his troops; but not being able to effect an entrance, he was obliged to retreat in 1600 A.D. After this, the heir apparent had the Pegu king murdered, lest the Siamese king might think it worth his while to attack Toungoo again on his account.

In 1602 this prince rebuilt the palace erected by *Zeyathoora*, and beautified it. He also designed the islands in the lakes, and in the same year built the *Showé Tsan Daw* pagoda. He died in 1606, and was succeeded by his son.

Soon after the accession of the latter, Toungoo was invaded by the King of Ava, and the Toungoo king, having ignominiously shown the white feather, was obliged to submit to his wishes, having his

brother and other relatives taken from him and placed in *Penya* in the year 1607.

After this, the Toungoo prince sent letters to the Siriam ruler, Phillip de Buto, to come and take Toungoo. The latter did as he was requested, and carried away the Toungoo king as a prisoner to Siriam in 1621. The same year the King of Ava attacked Siriam, killed Phillip de Buto, the King of Toungoo, and others, and took away several of their followers to Ava.

Nat Shin Noung was the last King of Toungoo. After his death, a comparatively unimportant official, with the title of *Abaya Kamanee*, looked after the affairs of Toungoo till 1637 A.D., when the first governor was appointed from Ava.

From that time, Toungoo continued a dependency of Ava till the British took the town in 1853. *Moung Showé Tsee*, the newly appointed governor, made his escape before the British troops entered the place.

Edward O'Riley, Esq., was the first Deputy Commissioner of Toungoo.

CHAPTER X.

NATTOUNG, OR "DEMON MOUNT."

SOME forty miles, as the crow flies, south-east of the ancient city of Toungoo, and at the extreme southern limit of a chain of lofty mountains, which serve as the watershed of the valleys of the Salwen and Sittang rivers, is the notable peak of Nattoung, or "Demon Mount," famous in mythological story.

This splendid range which though comparatively so near, was in the hot weather completely hidden by the smoke of the countless jungle fires that mark the sites where the Karens pursue their wasteful system of husbandry. But in every break of the South West Monsoon, it stood out in massive grandeur, and culminating in its sublime beauty when the rains had cleared away, invited us, as it were, to visit it; so it was with many pleasurable anticipations we made arrangements for a trip thereto.

Accordingly, on a beautiful morning in January, 1868, accompanied by two friends, we set out on our journey.

An hour after crossing the river we arrived at the Seven Pagodas, well known to English residents as a pleasant place for picnics and interesting

to pious Buddhists, as noticed in our chapter on the history of Toungoo.

After leaving the village the road was excellent for more than half the way to our destination, but afterwards more rugged and difficult owing to its following the rocky beds of two or three affluents of the *Thouk-yay-gat* stream, or to being blocked up by huge trunks of fallen trees, denizens of the primeval forests we were traversing.

One of our companions was in his glory in these magnificent forests, and enhanced our appreciation of his social qualities by giving us an immense amount of information in regard to the flora and rest of the vegetable world around us, in an easy and popular way. The least observant, however, without the guidance of such an excellent cicerone, could hardly fail to be astonished at the variety of plants that met our gaze. Nature is indeed lavish of her bounties to this and other evergreen forests in the hills, but it would be impossible to give an idea of their great interest to the botanical world, without trespassing longer on the patience of our readers than is intended by these recollections. Suffice it to say we were charmed with the novelty of the scene, still the first open glade we came to, struck us with its calm beauty more than anything else seen during our trip. For, fully impressed as we afterwards were with the beautiful scenery to be met with all over the eastern portion of the district, admitting to the full the sublime grandeur of the view from the summit of glorious *Nattoung*, that rears his hoary head eight thousand feet above the sea, marking the limit of British supremacy to the far

east, and accustomed to the imposing forms and variety of colour that nature assumes in eastern climes, we unanimously confessed that the scenery of the *Thouk-yay-gat* stream near Paylawa, especially at the point we first struck it, was without exception the loveliest we had seen in this country.

This beautiful *Thouk-yay-gat* rushing with a swift ripple over the sandy shoals, and anon madly forcing its way through massive granite boulders, assuming the many fantastic shapes that only a mountain stream can boast of, and here and there forming for itself angry little whirlpools, or tranquil basins where the fish securely swam, stood out in bold relief from a background of luxuriant vegetation of every conceivable form and colour, enchanted us with a scene that reminded us of our own beloved land. At first it was our intention to go on at once to *Bawgalay*, which is only a short march; partly, however, as both we and our followers were fatigued from our journey of the previous day, and partly because the Karens at *Bawgalay* are strict Sabbatarians, whose prejudices we did not care to offend by marching on Sunday, but chiefly, it must be confessed, so enchanted were we with the "emerald stream"—the old name for the *Thouk-yay-gat*, that orders were given for a halt, although the elephants were nearly loaded.

Fishing rods were jointed instanter, and after an earnest consultation as to the most taking form and colour, flies were adjusted and the work of whipping the stream began in earnest, but though we diligently tried every likely spot, we unfortunately succeeded in catching nothing bigger than sprats.

Romantically situated as our locality was, having our lodging in a little hut near the margin of the stream, the stern reality of noxious odours in the vicinity, incompatible with nature as she ought to be in such a rural spot, was at once apparent when we betook ourselves to the place prepared for us, which being in close proximity to a temporary bazaar held in the dry weather (at which the mountain Karens dispose of tassamum and other products to Burmese traders), was anything but pleasant. These, however, were slight evils when other advantages of the place were taken into consideration; and after refreshing ourselves with a swim in the clear pool in front of our camp, to the astonishment of the Karens, we were quite ready to appreciate dinner, and to sleep soundly afterwards, not even dreaming of the herds of wild elephants which occasionally take possession of these hills and glens, and remaining for weeks, render the travelling dangerous.* Immediately on leaving *Paylawa*, we had practical experience of the perversity of the Karen mind in making hill roads. It was aggravating to notice that had the ridgway of easy inclines existing between *Paylawa* and *Bawgalay* been made use of in the way that common sense points out, there would be little difficulty in making a good road for ponies and ordinary pedestrians, instead of taking the path right up the face of the hills and

* A few years ago a *Nakhan*, or Extra Assistant Commissioner, while out one dark night on the track of some Burmese dacoits, came point-blank in front of a wild elephant, and before the poor man could turn and run, the elephant threw his trunk around his neck and killed him.

straight down the opposite incline, necessitating one to be sound in wind and limb to walk up them with any comfort. It was decided as cruel to make our ponies carry us up the steep places, so we manfully tackled the difficulty on foot, and thanks to the thermometer standing at 50°, were able to overcome it successfully, occasionally taking advantage of a bend in the road to admire the view, and also to rest our lungs, which were not in that state of perfection which subsequent use made them.

Just before reaching *Bawgalay* we were met by the Actuary *Nakhan*, or extra Assistant Commissioner, and shortly afterwards were received by a deputation of the village elders, with their native pastor at their head, all of whom seemed glad to see us. The Karens kindly placed their chapel, a neatly shingled wooden building, commanding a glorious view, at our disposal, and some of the church property also, including the minister's desk and chair, were made to serve our comfort.

A bath-room, as well as places for our servants, had also thoughtfully been built, and on our expressing a wish to perform our ablutions, a troop of women and girls immediately started off to draw water for us. Each woman carried five or six buckets made from single joints of the *Bambusa gigantea*, which ranges in size from twenty to twenty-four inches in length, and sometimes as much as thirty inches in circumference.

These buckets are slung together on a cord, and carried on the back, the cord being brought round the forehead of the water carrier, the *tout ensemble* being strikingly picturesque.

Just at dusk the minister's chair and desk were held in temporary requisition for Divine Service, to which the people were summoned by the chapel gong. Soon after about fifty of the villagers came in and sat on the floor amid profound silence. The service commenced with a hymn, in which all the congregation joined, an extempore prayer delivered by the pastor followed, who after this read a small portion selected from the New Testament, illustrating his subject by a short lecture. His delivery was simple and fluent, and judging by his earnest manner, his exhortations were calculated to do good. The service, which was most interesting, concluded with the Doxology, rendered by the sweet voices of the women, and by the partially trained bass notes of the men, in a way that would have gladdened the heart of many an English vicar.

The missionaries have taken considerable pains to develope the natural talent for melody that the Karens possess, and some of their congregations which have had this advantage reflect credit on their instructors, and produce results both pleasing and effective; while others having been taught only those old-fashioned refrains which, in spite of their utter dulness, positive deficiency of melody and inadaptability of words to music, commend themselves to some persons in an unaccountable way, involuntarily reminded us of the incongruous results attending similar eccentric views which not long ago, if not to the present day, distinguished many a country choir.

"Fortunately for the ears and risibilities of the present generation," as a writer in "Notes and

Queries" remarks, "our tunes are now selected with much greater regard for the proprieties than some thirty or forty years ago."

The more spirited, but not less devotional character of the metres adapted to the psalmody of the present day, seems to have struck the key-note of popular sympathy to a degree never accorded to the more monotonous hymnology of our fore-fathers, which still obtains among many well-meaning people, who resent the innovation we allude to as somewhat unseemly in places of worship.

Instances of abortive attempts to fit in words to these mournful measures, resulting apparently in lack of genius for adapting music of the orthodox doleful pattern, will occur to many of our readers.

The "humouring," or constant repetition of syllables and words, which is such a distinguishing feature of the Irish ballad, owes its origin very probably to the same causes which led to the adoption of "humouring" in our hymnology of the past generation; for the more lugubrious an Irish ballad, the more it is supposed to appeal to the popular sentiment, and the more monotonous the hymns to which we allude, the more were they considered adapted to sacred purposes.

Numerous examples might be given both in Karen and English to explain our meaning, but we shall content ourselves by selecting a few from our miscellaneous note-book, from "Notes and Queries," and odd corners of our memory.

For instance, a common metre tune, called "Miles' lane," sung to verse 5 of hymn 126,

Book II, by Dr. Watts, produces the following result :—

"And more eggs—more eggs—more exalts our joys."

The simple line "And love thee better than before," when sung to "Job," is rendered thus :—

"And love thee Bet,
And love thee better than before."

While "Stir up this stupid heart to pray," would be

"Stir up this stu—
Stir up this stupid heart to pray."

A writer who signs with the initials B. P. W., notes that he heard a choir sing the following to the tune of "Aaron," 7s.

"With thy Benny—
With thy Benny—
With thy Benediction seal."

The same writer declares that the line, "And take thy pilgrim home," was sung in a fashionable church in London as follows :—

"And take thy pil—
And take thy pil—
And take thy pilgrim home."

To a writer in the "Quarterly Magazine" for 1862, we are indebted for cases in point, "My poor polluted heart" being mangled as follows :—

"My poor pol—
My poor pol—
My poor polluted heart."

But the most ludicrous of all, and the last with

which we shall inflict our readers, is one quoted by S. H. H. :—

> "And we will catch the flee—
> And we will catch the flee—
> And we will catch the flee—ee—ing hour."

So soon as the service was over, the people retired, as they came, in a quiet and orderly manner.

Some of the men, before leaving, were taken apart by the pastor, and from the earnestness of the latter, we at first believed he was exhorting some unruly members of the congregation to turn from the error of their ways; but it turned out that the worthy man was impressing on our porters the virtue of punctuality, in reference to the arrangement for the following day. After dinner we were agreeably surprised by a visit from the pastor's wife and two or three nice intelligent looking women, who came to get quinine for their children and to have a chat. Knowing Burmese fairly, they conversed for an hour or so, intelligently and pleasantly, on a variety of subjects; after which they bade us "good night, shook hands, and retired;" leaving us favourably impressed with their modest and sensible behaviour.

From what we have observed since then, as well as from accounts we have had from the missionaries, we should say that many of the Karen women are gifted with more than ordinary mental capacity, as compared with the women of other eastern races; but their powers, as is the case under more favourable conditions in civilised countries, are often nullified by the prejudices against the education of women, and their talents crop out only when

fostered by the culture of the missionaries. It is much to be regretted that more is not accomplished for the advancement of women as teachers of the young—her natural vocation; still strenuous efforts have been made in this direction in Rangoon, Bassein, Toungoo, and other places, and several young women taught in the mission schools, have, as wives of village pastors or teachers, done good work. Two of the women who came to see us were educated by Mrs. Mason at *Toungoo*, while another for two or three years taught a school in a limestone cave, in which she and other Christian converts had hidden themselves to escape persecution. We have seen letters written by some of these female teachers detailing their experiences among some of the most savage tribes, which were not only replete with valuable information in reference to the people in whose territories they consented to exile themselves, but amply testified to their unselfish devotion.

Bawgalay is situated on a lofty ridge about 3,000 feet above the sea, and from its vicinity to Toungoo, its freedom from rank vegetation, and the abundance of sites available for building purposes, is eminently adapted for a sanatarium, as proposed by Mr. O'Riley.

The results of a comparison between the temperature of *Bawgalay* and *Toungoo*, proved that there was an average difference of 10° in favour of the former at different times of the day during the hot weather.

Thus *Bawgalay*, although hotter than many other places on the hills with a lower elevation, but more thickly covered with forests, was a decided

advantage over the plains, inasmuch as its airy situation is equivalent to at least 10° less than the thermometer registers, as regards the effect on persons who leave the sultry valley of the Sittang, and try a change of climate therein.

Before the introduction of Christianity, *Bawgalay* consisted of one village on the top of the hill, with three or four smaller hamlets situated in glens or on knolls on the sides of the mountain. In 1855, the people of these villages were induced by Chief *Pawba* to come together and build a large chapel on the mountain summit; but they are fast disintegrating again, for there are now two or three distinct hamlets in the old localities, besides the village near the chapel. The places were formerly much infested by tigers, and the people have a tale of one having visited the pastor's schoolroom one night, some 12 or 13 years ago, and carried off one of his pupils.

The sides of the mountain were selected by Mr. Leeds, the conservator of forests, for a chincona plantation, for which they seem well adapted; for of four plants which were brought here, two of them sickly when they arrived, two remain, and when last seen were flourishing trees some 15 feet high.

Bawgalay is the best known, if not the most important of the Karen villages near *Toungoo*, and deserves special notice on this account, leaving aside the necessity of endeavouring to give a description of the peculiarities which it shares with other villages built by many of the Karen tribes.

The so-called villages in this region consist generally of one or two houses, while in *Bawgalay* there are three or four. Some of these houses con-

tain 60 or 70 rooms, each occupied by a separate family, so that the size of a village is estimated by the number of hearths it contains. Viewed from a distance, some of them reminded one of Swiss chalets, especially near pine forests, but the enchantment that distance lends them, is broken on a nearer view by the dirty tumble-down appearance which characterises them.

When first seen, they gave us the impression of being very like a cluster of big rabbit hutches, on rickety poles not thicker than scarlet-runner sticks, fastened together in the primitive way peculiar to English school boys, whose building materials are limited and skill in carpentry defective; the funny corners sticking out here and there being in perfect keeping with the idea, till it was dispelled by observing that the passages communicating with the "hutches" were occupied by men, women, and children, under circumstances that clearly proved they were used as their habitations.

On a nearer view, we found that the "grand staircase" consisted of a huge bamboo, cut in notches about a foot apart, convenient enough for people with bare feet, but at first impracticable to those wearing boots. Similar steps communicated with the roof, on which the people spread their cotton, chillies, cocoa nuts, &c., to dry. Pigs, goats, and other live stock luxuriated in pens below, while the poultry simply roosted over the heads of the inmates, realizing a state of dirt and discomfort scarcely conceivable, but which the inhabitants, from habit, accept as a matter of course.

Both Jupiter and Venus were visible every

evening. We were able to distinguish Jupiter's moons with a glass very clearly, and the Karens, as well as our Burmese followers, evinced considerable interest in what to them was a discovery. One or two of the teachers had acquired the rudiments of astronomy at the mission schools, and could speak on the subject intelligently. The uneducated, however, do not know much about it. They believe the sun goes round the earth, but, according to Dr. Macgowan, they are comparatively far advanced in that they "hold to the astronomical system of Ptolemy, while adjacent Buddhist nations suppose the sun, moon, and stars revolve round a great mountain to the north, in lines parallel to the earth."* The Karens do not recognize any planet except Venus. "When a morning star, she is called the 'star receiving the morning,' when an evening star, the 'star receiving the evening;'"† while the Burmese admit eight planets, from which the days of the week have their names, two being devoted to Wednesday.

They also speak of the sun as a planet. Dr. Mason has recorded some interesting notes on the astronomy of the Karens, in the "Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal," from which we glean that the people have names for a few of the most prominent constellations. The "Great Bear" they call an elephant, while the pole star is a mouse crawling into the elephant's trunk. The Pleiades is termed the "great house," and with a somewhat similar conceit to the seven daughters of Atlas and Pleione

* Dr. Macgowan, "Journ. Ind. Arch.," vol. iv, No. 6.

† Dr. Mason, "J. A. S. B."

of Greek mythology, who after death changed into stars, is regarded as a family, consisting originally of seven persons, one of whom has been lost.

The milky-way is known to the southern tribes as the "Paddybin," while the Bwés named it "Bayar street," because the innumerable clusters of stars therein remind them of the indistinguishable mass of people generally found in a bazaar.

A shooting star is held to be a "youth-star going to visit a maiden-star;" a more pleasing, if not more poetical idea, than the Arab belief, which assumes it to be Azrael's death summons. Possibly the superstition that exists in some parts of England that shooting stars are unlucky, may have an eastern origin.

Gold and silver is sure to be found, they say, where another class of meteors falls to the earth. The latter are supposed to be animals that produce these precious metals. In common with more enlightened peoples, the Karens regard the appearance of comets as indicating approaching war, famine, pestilence, or other public calamity. Our ancestors had a somewhat similar fancy, for Milton speaks of a comet—

> "That fires the length of Orphiuchus huge
> In the Arctic sky, and from his horrid hair
> Shakes pestilence and war."
>
> "*Paradise Lost*," ii.

It is, at any rate, of ancient date, for Shakspeare, in "Richard II," tells us that—

> "Meteors fright the fixed stars of heaven;
> The pale-faced moon looks bloody on the earth,
> And lean-looked prophets whisper fearful change:
> These signs forerun the death or fall of kings."

As the elephants were slow at hill work, we discarded them here in favour of porters, which we found a much better arrangement.

Our march from *Bawgalay* was like that of the previous day, the ups and downs however being decidedly more telling. It was with admiration that we, puffing and blowing like porpoises, witnessed the agility of the Karens, who, carrying our traps in their peculiar conical baskets, like huge strawberry pottles, on their backs, went up the steepest hills with marvellous ease; but our feelings actually amounted to envy, when we heard one of our Burmese retainers, a dweller in the plains, singing operatic airs from the "Silver Hill," and other popular dramas at the top of his voice, apparently as little distressed as the mountaineers.

We passed through three picturesque Karen villages, namely, *Yaythogyee*,* *Kolo*, and *Mondinegalay*, before we reached our destination at Mondinegyee.

All the village pastors, elders, and others met us at a little distance from their villages, and gave us a hearty welcome, presenting us at the same time with eggs, plantains, and other marks of their good will.

The greater part of our route now wound along ridges little differing in the vegetable clothing, being for the most part through "toungyas," or hill clear-

* Dr. Mason tells us that, at *Yaythogyee*, a cairn on the spur of a ridge is pointed out, which tradition says was the burial place of the *Pwo Karens*, a tribe found now only in Pegu and Tenasserim, which tends to prove that the Karens had moved from north to south.

ings, more or less deserted, and partially overgrown with bamboos or elephant grass.

Mondinegyee, where we arrived early in the afternoon, consists of three hamlets pleasantly situated half way up a ridge, at an elevation of about 2,200 feet above the sea, in the middle of very beautiful areca gardens, famed all over Burmah for the excellent nuts they produce.

From a note with which Dr. Mason has favoured us, we find that *Mondine* or *Mondinegyee* was a stirring place some 50 or 60 years ago, when a Karen from the south came to the village with a single follower; and, setting up a peculiar system of worship, told the people that in a little while they would see God come with power. The villagers built a chapel for him and assembled for singing and prayers every evening. The doctrines taught by this southerner spread, and he soon counted nearly the whole of the *Pakus* and the *Maunepghas* among his disciples. They threw off the Burmese yoke, and for four years paid no taxes. The Burmese sent out troops against them, and a battle was fought in which 200 Burmans were killed, without the loss of a single Karen. The Burmese eventually prevailed, after sustaining another defeat, and compelled the Karens to pay tribute.

When the Karens were defeated, the leader of their worship said to his disciples, "The obstructions are so great that you cannot seek the way of God now. When you hear of a tiger devouring men on *Nattoung*, or the arrival of white foreigners below, then know that the Word of God and your salvation has arrived."

The *Bawgalay* porters were relieved here, but their old Chief Lèdè agreed to stay by us. He proved a good man and true, and we were indebted to his influence for having the roads, in his jurisdiction, cleared, and everything well arranged for our comfort and pleasure. Lèdè had the reputation of being one of the staunchest pillars of the Baptist Church, promoted education, and gave his cordial aid to everything calculated to do good to his countrymen; and, in spite of old age and its consequent infirmities, and occasional prostration from attacks of fever, was always cheerful and ready with his help and advice.

He did not object to sporting when it came in his way, judging by the interest he evinced in matters pertaining to the chase, and at *Plomado*, on our return journey, successfully negotiated the purchase of a dog famed all over the country as an elkhound, for the modest sum of five rupees, or ten shillings.

The dog, a small piebald cur, with a short tail, not unlike the "Poonamallee terrier," which the British soldier is wont to manufacture from pariah dogs for "Griffins" with sporting proclivities, was brought up for inspection. It was laughable to notice how keenly Lèdè and his companions discussed all his points, rubbing down one leg, then another; now criticising the way the head was put on, then the tail; his muscles, too, underwent a rigid examination by pressure, particular attention being paid to his girth. In short, it was a ludicrous caricature of what takes place in more civilised societies when purchasing a horse.

The parallel was perhaps more perfect, from the fact that Lèdè persistently found many faults with the animal before he purchased it, and declared it to be perfection afterwards.*

We left *Mondinegyee* at sunrise, and in two hours reached the village of *Sucheden*, situated on the spur of a range over which the road runs parallel to an extensive valley.

About a mile and a half from *Sucheden* we came to another hamlet of the same name, on the banks of a stream which reminded us much of the *Thouk-yay-gat* at *Paylawa*, owing to its homelike beauty. With this difference the *Paylawa* scenery assumed more of the appearance of the secluded parts of the Highlands, or Killarney; whereas here, with a small flight of the imagination, one might fancy himself on the threshold of an English nobleman's demesne.

Instead of crossing this stream and climbing the ridge behind it, which is doubtless the hill famed for its rare orchids, described by Dr. Mason, we made a tour in a south-easterly direction to *Plomado*, which we reached early in the afternoon. *Plomado* is a considerable village consisting of three hamlets such as have already been described, containing about 60 hearths, and is situated on an eminence in a valley surrounded by hills, with very fine areca and other gardens in its vicinity.

Under the Burmese régime, the people of *Plomado* had charge of the passes to the *Yousalen* valley, and

* These little dogs are much prized by the Karens, for although not swift, they are very keen and persevering in hunting animals by scent.

to the Salwen river by Nattoung. For this service they were exempt from all taxation, on the condition that they kept watch and ward against attacks on the Burmese territory.

In like manner the Bwé Karens in the *Koon-oung* circle held their lands under similar tenures for guarding the passes from *Karennee*.

In the evening, when having our usual talk round a roaring fire, our guides informed us that Christian influences extended only a few miles further to the east, and as they were doubtful as to how we should be able to get on in heathen lands, strongly urged us to enlist *Looţoo*, the pastor of the village community, in our behalf, as he was much respected, and had much influence.

We acted on their advice, and succeeded so well that, with a little persuasion, he not only promised to induce his flock to accompany us as porters to *Nattoung*, but also agreed to join our party, a promise he so fully carried out as to enhance the pleasure of our journey, and to induce us afterwards to advise that his earnest co-operation should be ensured in furthering the scheme of Government to establish a chincona plantation at *Plomado*.

Two young men have since gone to the *Nilgherries* to learn how to cultivate the plant (our guide *Tawdee* being one), and we trust *Plomado* has a brilliant future before it, as we are satisfied that, owing to the success attending the culture of the chincona plant at *Bawgalay*, which has not the same advantages as *Plomado*, the experiment now tried in the latter place will prove a decided success.

Tea and coffee plantations might also be worked

there to advantage, if the people could be induced to take an interest therein.

After passing *Plomado*, we had an opportunity of seeing the Karen hill country in its virgin state. Immense forests, studded with gigantic trees of similar character to those met in our first day's march, attracted the attention; and if anything more was wanted to prove that we had arrived far from the haunts of man, it was the peculiar wailing cry of the white-handed *gibbons*, challenging or answering each other from their inaccessible heights or in the deep woods.

Before arriving at our camping place, we had our first view of the pine forests; a most refreshing sight in this country.

Of the trees now met with, the following were the most common:—Two kinds of arboreous *vaccinium*, or bilberryworts; two species of *eurya*, or wild tea; several oaks, rhododendrons, and a species of coffee; while a gigantic *mucuna*, or cow-itch, with pods two feet in length, and not unlike the *entada* creeper, is occasionally seen. The trees in these ridges are full of orchids, many of rare kinds.

We now came on *toung-yas*, or hill clearings, differing in character from those met with in our second and third day's marches. In them we noticed several species of wild tea and cinnamon trees, and our eyes were especially gladdened, too, by the sight of two kinds of raspberries, the common English fern or brake (*plexis aquilina*), as well as everlasting flowers; the rich, loamy soil, formed from the disintegration of the superior granites, evidently suiting them admirably.

Shortly after passing the most eastern hamlet of *Bookyee*, we ascended *Thooboo* ridge, which, owing to the ground being covered with pine needles, was tedious and difficult; on reaching the summit, however, we were rewarded for our exertions by obtaining the first view of *Nattoung*, which had hitherto been shut out by the *Poghaw* range, visible from Toungoo.

The march from this point to the "Boulder Station," at the foot of Mount *Lokho*, was very interesting. Several European plants now began to show themselves, among others a species of gentian, several sedges, and last, but not least in interest to us, two kinds of violets.

We were also fortunate enough to secure capital specimens of that curious orchid, the "Toungoo Lady's Slipper" (*Cypripedium*). Its flower is a handsome one, of orange greenish hue, that bears not an inapt resemblance to a slipper. Just before reaching our destination, the pines and other alpine forests having been left behind, we again entered evergreen forests, but of a very different kind to those previously seen. The *Bucklandia populi folia*, only known hitherto as having its habitat in the *Himalaya* and *Khasya* hills, makes its appearance here; also a species of maple (*acer*) (European genus), not known to grow in Burmah till Mr. Kurtz visited these regions in 1868. Tree ferns of thirty feet in height are not uncommon. Of climbing plants, several kinds of pepper deserve notice; Mr. Kurtz also talks of a species of bamboo bearing fruit as big as one's fist. Ferns are common, and all different from the forests in the lower ranges.

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KAREN BRIDGE IN THE DELTA

We encamped on the banks of the *Laylo*, a mountain torrent tributary to the *Yonsalen* stream, a temporary hut having been built for us under the shadow of gigantic granite boulders, some forty feet high.

Next morning we ascended *Lokho*, or Wild Palm Mount, so named from the number of wild palm trees growing thereon. The ascent was rather steep, but was accomplished in a few minutes over an hour, and after this we were able to reach the summit of *Nattoung* in another two hours with little difficulty.

The splendid view that now met our gaze repaid us for all our trouble.

To the north, *Poghaw* loomed out in massive grandeur, the foremost of a line of giants that troop behind him, marking out in bold and imperishable outline the boundary between the British possessions and *Karennee;* paying homage, as it were, to glorious Nattoung, which, although in reality two hundred feet or so lower than *Poghaw*, is to this day supposed by the Karens to be higher, and in traditionary lore, both poetical and prose, holds a higher position. On all other sides there was a grand panorama spread out before us, obscured somewhat by cloud and fog, but still sublime.

On looking back to the west, the various ranges that gave us so much trouble to cross, dwarfed into comparative insignificance, and ending abruptly parallel to high light in the landscape that flashes here and there, and which we knew to be the Sittang. Beyond this lay the valley of the same name, studded at intervals with patches of gold, where the sun caught the rice-fields, still yellow,

although the crops had been taken to the threshing-floor; the whole being bound by the Yoma range.

To the east several ranges were also seen, apparently surpassing in size and grandeur those to the west, a glimpse of the Salwen river occasionally relieved the otherwise monotonous aspect of that portion of the view devoid of water scenery, while to the south lay the beautiful valleys of the *Yousalen* and *Yaw*, bounded on both sides by lofty mountains, now presenting a deserted appearance, but less than half a century ago they were most populous. "Nattoung," or "Demon Mount," so called by the Burmese because it was the reputed dwelling-place of a powerful *Nat*, or spirit, is also known to them as "*Toung-goung-don*," or Bald-headed Mountain, because its head is bare of trees; to the Karens, as *Thauthie*, meaning "as much as a comb." Dr. Mason says that the summit when seen from a distance, bears a somewhat striking resemblance to the little comb a Karen sticks slantingly in the knot of hair that he twists on his head, but as we had left the mountain before we had heard the Karen signification, we were unable to judge for ourselves.

The Karens were almost indignant at being told their favourite mountain was not the highest, and brought tradition to bear on us in the endeavour to prove us wrong. Tradition has it that the whole world was covered with water except a tiny bit of its top, "as much as a comb," and only when the waters had somewhat abated, the highest peak of the chain of mountains to the north appeared sufficiently out of the water to allow a bird, called by

them *Poghaw* (we forget the English equivalent), to rest upon it, hence its name.

In the "Toungoo News," published in 1865, Dr. Mason writes, "Nattoung figures in Karen "poetry as a place where the Karens had formerly "gone in the midst of persecution to worship God; "and as one where God would appear for their "deliverance. We met with the following lines at "Tavoy more than a quarter of a century ago, three "hundred miles south of Thauthie.

"God will come and bring the Great Thauthie;
"We must worship, both small and great.
"The great Thauthie, God created;
"Let us ascend and worship.
"There is a great mountain in the ford;
"Can you ascend and worship God?
"There is a great mountain in the way;
"Are you able to ascend and worship God?
"You call yourselves the sons of God;
"How many evenings have you ascended to worship God?
"You call yourselves the children of God;
"How often have you ascended to worship God?"

There is a divine female who dwells on the mountain, whom Dr. Mason refers to as the "Goddess of Fortune."

She "spends all her time in blessing and cursing." The elders say: "If she curses the leaves that they may fall, they fall; if she blesses the young leaves, they sprout. If she curses the trees to die, they die; if she blesses them to live, they live."

Everything, the Elders say, takes place according to her imprecations.

When the long-armed apes are heard screaming at night, it is said they scream on account of having heard the imprecations of the goddess Tàlà, the name given to this lady. The apes on Thauthie hear her words and cry, and the language is taken up by all the other apes within hearing, and is thus passed on from one to another throughout the whole land.

Thauthie or *Nattoung* has many places on or near its summit suitable for residences. When we were there, water for drinking purposes was available within easy distance and is said to be so all the year round. It is clothed with alpine pasture chiefly consisting of arundinella, fringed by rather stunted trees packed in dense forests. Among the most noticeable were a species of pean tree, one or two kinds of oak, three of *bacinnium*, or wortleberry, two of rhododendron, besides a great number of plants known in Europe. Nearly all the trees were covered with beautiful mosses, ferns and orchids. On the roots of some of the trees we noticed a very curious reddish parasite, something like coral in appearance, but of a flesh-like substance. Mr. Kurtz calls it *Balanaphoza*.

A well-beaten path in an easterly direction, we were informed, led to the tin mines, noticed in our account of Karennee, as extensively worked by the Karens. We unfortunately had not time to visit them.

Our followers having cut down a tree with a very straight stem, manufactured it into a flagstaff, and

one of their number, for "a consideration," gave up his red turban for a flag, which having hoisted in the very spot where many years ago O'Riley erected a beacon, at the request of the Karens we fired a salvo in honour thereof, and wended our way to camp at the granite boulders.

At midnight we had an unpleasant visitor in the shape of a tiger, who announced his arrival in the very middle of the camp by a peculiar noise like "thit, thit," which there is no mistaking if one has ever heard it.

The alarm was at once given and the ominous cry of "tiger" vociferated in some half dozen languages, effectually scaring the brute, who seemed bent on hastening the time of the spiritual deliverance of the Karens, by devouring a man in the region of *Nattoung*, and thus verifying the tradition already referred to in this chapter.

The following day being Sunday, our Christian friends were desirous we should halt, but much as we should like to please them, prudence strongly urged that we should push on, as we made the alarming discovery that our provisions had dwindled to a seriously low ebb; we were therefore forced to make a sabbath day's journey to the hamlet of *Bookyre*, where we encamped for the night.

After dinner, as usual, the Karens came round our bonfire to warm themselves and talk. Among others the chief's brother, who perhaps feeling himself more at home than the wilder beings around him, deliberately lifted his coat-tails and proceeded to warm himself after the manner of "Paterfamilias," in England; with this essential difference that

whereas "Paterfamilias" wears "inexpressibles," this worthy was in *puris naturalibus*, by no means verifying the saying, "when unadorned, adorned the most."

An almost irresistible inclination to apply a lighted cheroot to his centre of gravity was modified by a less practical hint that this was "bad form," and the man at once apologised for his unintentionally rude behaviour.

In the course of the evening he good-naturedly responded to the wishes of the company by narrating the Karen version of "Jack the Giant-killer," the substance of which is as follows :—

"THE GIANT-KILLER."

A certain woman had seven sons and seven dogs. The youngest son possessed superhuman wisdom.

The seven sons with the seven dogs went out to clear land, and after their departure a giant came to the old woman, and was about to devour her, when she said to him, "Grandfather, before you eat me let me call the seven sons I have; after you have devoured them then eat me."

The giant said, "Very well, call them;" so she called, "Mother's seven sons, mother's seven dogs! A monster, a monster will eat mother. Mother's sons come to mother.

"Mother's seven dogs, mother's seven sons! A monster, a monster will eat me. Come to mother."

The seven sons in the clearing heard their mother's voice, and one said to the eldest, "Mother is calling loudly, go and see what is the matter."

He went, and the giant devoured him. In this way six sons were devoured, but the seventh being wiser than the rest took one of the dogs and bound him all round with thorny ratans, and told the dog, "When I call 'Dog, dog,' bite hard; when I say 'So, so,' then relax your grasp."

On receiving instructions the dog went up to the giant and bit him, and the giant could not handle him nor drive him off, so he called out "Grandson, call off your dog, grandfather will die." Then the young man called out "Dog, dog!" (as if calling him off), but the dog bit the harder the more he called, till the giant expired.

When the giant was dead he called out "So, so;" and the dog gave up his hold.

Then he ripped up the giant, and restored to life his six brethren, and when they were all restored to life they singed the body of the giant (as they would a hog), and chopping up the flesh into small pieces, pickled it.

Before long the wife and children of the giant came to seek him, and the mother of the seven sons invited them to her house; she cooked rice for the whole, and made curry of the pickled giant.

The relations of the giant ate heartily, but one of the youngsters said, "This curry smells strongly of grandfather!" His mother reproved him, and said, "Do not talk such folly, lest the traps are destroyed."*

By and by one of them found a bit of the old

* When traps are set the Karens have to behave themselves demurely, or the traps will catch nothing.

man's nose in the curry, and none could eat anything more.

After they had eaten, they all said their tongues itched exceedingly, and asked the old woman, "What shall we do?"

She replied, "Scratch them with grandmother's whisky," and spreading it on their tongues scratched them. Soon their tongues fell out and all died.

Therefore the Elders said, "If there be seven sons, one of them will have uncommon wisdom, if the youngest one has it not, the eldest one will have it, and if the eldest one has it not, one of the middle ones will have it."

The chief having finished his tale, called upon one of his followers for another, who, without more ado, began the story of

"THE PRINCESS AND THE LIZARD."

Once upon a time a woman had a bloodsucker, or tree lizard for a son, and died soon after it was born.

The grandmother took care of the child, and in the course of time it said to the grandmother, "Go and espouse me to the king's youngest daughter, please."

She answered, "Grandchild, you are a tree lizard; do you suppose the king will be pleased with you?" However, the old woman went to the king and said, "My grandson, a tree lizard, has bid me come and espouse him to your youngest daughter, do you approve?"

The king called his eldest daughter and said, "Would you like to marry a tree lizard?"

"A lizard, a lizard, how could I love a lizard?" she replied; six daughters answered their father in this way, and then he called his youngest and said to her, "Daughter, would you like to marry a lizard?"

She answered her father, "If father gives me a tree lizard, I will take him; if father gives me a flying lizard, I will take him."

So she consented to take the tree lizard for her husband.

The old woman returned, and told her grandson that she had succeeded in betrothing him to the king's youngest daughter, and she took and put him in a basket, and carried him on her back to the place where he was married to the king's daughter.

After awhile, when harvest was over, and the time for clearing land arrived, all the men went to the woods to cut down trees, but he remained in the house with his wife.

She said to him, "The men have all gone to cut down trees, why do not you go?" He answered, "I will go to-morrow."

The next day he went out and ascending a stump, he whistled, and all the trees and bamboos on seven mountains immediately fell flat on the ground.

The mother of the princess asked her daughter, "What does your husband appear like at night?" She replied, "He becomes at night a beautiful young man, when he takes off his skin he is handsome."

Then the mother said, "If that be the case, when he pulls off his skin to-night, throw it over to me."

When night came and the lizard stripped off his skin to sleep, his wife took it and threw it over to her mother, and her mother put it into the fire and burnt it up.

In the morning when he woke up, he said to his wife, "The fire has burnt up my clothes." So his wife furnished him with suitable clothing, and he ceased to be a lizard.

As it was early, the same narrator was asked, and consented to repeat the tale of

"Rat and the Pagoda."

It is stated that Ai-pho-so was a cripple, but he was able to grow a little paddy, which a rat came to eat. He said to the rat, "Why will you eat my paddy, when I am such a cripple?"

The rat replied, "Give me one full meal and I will get you the king's youngest daughter in marriage."

He gave the rat a full meal of his paddy, and then the rat went to the royal pagoda, and gnawed a hole, and hid himself in it. Soon after, the king's youngest daughter came to the pagoda and prayed, and when she had finished, the rat called out, "Princess! listen, I will now pray, listen to my prayer."

Then he said, "Let the king's youngest daughter take for her husband Ai-pho-so the cripple. If she takes Ai-pho-so for her husband, may the towns be permanent, the cities established for ever. If she does not take Ai-pho-so the cripple for her husband, may the towns be destroyed, the cities go to ruin."

The princess heard this prayer and repeated it to her father.

So the king took Ai-pho-so for his son-in-law, and in the course of time, a dog came smelling for food under the house, and Ai-pho-so's wife went down and beat it to death.

The king ordered his son-in-law to watch the body of the dog, and while thus employed, a crow came and screamed out at him.

Ai-pho-so said, "When I have so much corruption as this to watch over, why do you come and scream out at me?"

The crow replied, "Give me one full meal, and I will do you good." Ai-pho-so allowed the crow to eat so much of the carrion as it pleased, and the crow in return cured him of his lameness. He subsequently enjoyed perfect health, and eventually became king of the country.

This wound up the entertainment for that evening, and the people returned home, apparently well pleased.

These nursery tales, childish as they may appear, are interesting in that they have been handed down from generation to generation, and have a link with that misty past which reveals itself in the bold saying of having "come from the north."

The same may be said of our own nursery tales for the legends of the ancient Scandinavian creed, from which many of ours are derived, although greatly metamorphosed, show themselves everywhere in a renewed and immortal bloom.

The names of Odin and Thor, Trigga and Iduna, are forgotten, but their deeds of potency remain, and

cast a spell on all the nurseries of England, Normandy and Germany, as well as over those of all the north of Europe.

All the witch, fairy, and dragon lore which Odin and the Asar brought from the East, exist under new names in the nursery lore of our infancy, in "Jack the Giant-killer," "Cinderella," "Blue Beard," "The Giant who Smelt the Blood of an Englishman," "Puss in Boots," &c.

On returning to our old quarters at *Plomado*, the Karens advised that we should take the southern road instead of by *Bawgalay*, and we, nothing loth to diversify our route and thereby see more of the country, gladly acquiesced in the arrangement, so Tawdee, our guide, trotted off on his little rat of a pony to apprise the good people of *Tawthadeu* that we should stop there for breakfast.

In a little over two hours we crossed the *Myitgnan* stream, which brought us into the country of the *Maunepghas*, and in another two hours reached *Tawthadeu*, after crossing several beautiful perennial rivulets, some with falls, which added to their charms.

Tawthadeu is very picturesquely situated on a knoll, half way up a steep mountain, and is on a more ambitious plan than the villages in this part of the country, as it contains a row of houses on each side of a broad street, which serves as a market-place and village green, the whole being commanded by the chapel in the centre. This is a great improvement on the usual barrack-like accommodation affected by other communities. Early in the afternoon we reached *Owndaw-byay*, situated on the pinnacle of a

steep hill, 3,000 feet above sea level, and commanding a most extensive view of the country around. The people had made many preparations for our reception, but as we wanted to get into Toungoo next day, we determined to push on *Wabo-Khyoung* village, where we put up in a good-sized chapel; but, owing to the prevalence of the measles, all the villagers had scattered into the woods as is their custom in visitations of this sort.

The same cause prevented our getting porters for our traps, but luckily we were able to procure elephants. Half an hour's walk brought us to *Ownbengyoung* village, so that we were sorry we did not push on the night before, for it is a much more considerable and neatly-arranged place.*

After this our journey lay along this course of the *Khyoung-ma-gnay*, which we crossed no less than thirty times in three hours, from thence to *Swata*, joining our old road a little to the east of the Seven Pagodas, and arriving at Toungoo well satisfied with our trip to the hills. Our Karen followers were also pleased, and in detailing their experiences to their pastor, Doctor Mason, acquainted him with the surprising fact that none of them had been kicked or cuffed during the whole tour. This incident, trivial as it may appear, is sufficiently suggestive to future tourists, who wish to succeed as well as we did in pleasing ourselves and the people about us.

The conclusion to be derived from the experiences of our journey is, that a road sufficiently practicable for elephants and ponies is indispensable before any

* This village, as well as *Owndaw-byay*, are particulary noticed in our account of the Karen annual gathering.

of the sites mentioned can be made available for sanataria.

We apprehend no great engineering difficulties in the accomplishment of this object. A very beautiful country with a temperate climate is now shut out from all excepting those who are in sufficiently good health to overcome the present difficulties in mountain travelling; but it is hoped that the Government may at no distant date take into its favourable consideration the propriety of facilitating the means of getting thereto.

CHAPTER XI.

Reminiscences of an Annual Gathering among the Christian Karens.

"Nobody ever thinks of reading missionary reports," remarked a friend of ours when we, in perhaps a weak moment, confided to him our intention of recording our experience of some of the results of missionary enterprise among the Karens of British Burmah. While we admit there is some truth in our friend's remark, we at the same time cannot help thinking that the missionaries are in many instances to blame for this lack of interest, simply because they have not the courage to leave the official groove, and make their narrations of more general interest to the public than they now are; but as previous notices from the pens of missionaries regarding the wonderful success attending the evangelisation of this interesting people, have proved exceptions to the rule in finding favour with the public, we trust that a plain unvarnished tale by a layman on the same subject may be acceptable.

The Christian Karens in Burmah have for several years been in the habit of holding a great gathering at some convenient place previously fixed upon, at which delegates from the different churches in the district, as well as all those who can manage to do

so, are expected to attend. At this meeting the affairs of the mission are discussed, and reports are read from the pastors of the different villages in regard to the moral, social, and religious progress or decadence of the communities under their respective charges, describing the state of their chapels and schools, recording the amount of interest therein, as evinced by the subscriptions of the people thereto, as well as statistics detailing the number of communicants, those who have embraced Christianity, or have fallen away from their professions since the previous reports, and in fact all particulars that may prove generally interesting.

These meetings are held in the cool weather, when the forest roads and paths are cleared of the dense vegetation that accumulates thereon in the rainy season. Opportunities are thus given for the Karens to have friendly and social gatherings, which serve to cement a better understanding among the different tribes, who for many years were jealous and suspicious of each other, and also tend to strengthen the people in their religious professions, in encouraging each other in supporting pastors and teachers, building chapels and schools, and advancing the cause of education and religious enlightenment. Two of these meetings were held by the Toungoo Karens in January, 1869. One, three or four days' journey to the east of the town, was composed of members of the different Christian communities, under the direction of the Reverend Messrs. Cross and Bunker, and another, about thirty miles south-east, comprised of people under the care of Dr. and Mrs. Mason. As we had expressed

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A Paku Karen bringing his Pig to Market

a wish to be present at one of these gatherings, we were courteously invited to attend both, which we resolved to do, but from unforseen causes were obliged to content ourselves with visiting Dr. Mason's people only, who on this occasion fixed on *Lookladen*, a village known to the Burmese as *Own-ben-Khyoung*, for their meeting. The writer, accompanied by his wife and little girl, left Toungoo two days before the day fixed for the meeting; Ramprasand, a famous tusker, being pressed into service as our riding elephant, while two other elephants carried our baggage, the ponies and attendants bringing up the rear. We had not proceeded far when we were obliged to dismount and remove the traps, to enable the elephants to ford the Sittang river, which was deeper than was expected, owing to a sudden fresh. Some delay therefore occurred in transporting the baggage in boats and repacking the elephants; so we amused ourselves in the interim by watching a Chinaman bargaining with some *Paku* Karens for their pigs. The Pakus, unlike many of their brethren further removed from the borders of civilisation, seemed almost as keen hands at bargaining as the cunning "celestial," but in default of further competition, no doubt disposed of the animals at a sacrifice rather than take them home again; for unacquainted with, or perhaps sceptical of, the efficacy of Paddy's well-known method for inveigling his pig to market, by mendacious assertions as to its destination, have given up all idea of combating swinish obstinacy, and therefore carry their porkers in neatly-made baskets, suspended by crooked sticks over their shoulders.

The Pakus, a sub-tribe of the Sgan family, are the first tribe met with after crossing the river Sittang at Toungoo, and are to be found as far as the "Great Watershed," some forty miles to the east. They are distinguished from other tunic-wearing Karens by having their tunics embroidered, each village clan being known by its distinctive embroidery. They are now a quiet and inoffensive people, who devote themselves assiduously to the culture of oranges, citrons, and limes, as well as to the breeding of pigs for the market. But when the English first occupied Toungoo, and for some time afterwards, the people were constantly engaged in feuds among themselves, or in fighting with the Red Karens.

We were met, soon after starting again, by some *Paku* chiefs, some of whom wished to accompany us to *Lookladen*, and others to escort us to the limits of Paku territory, where we encamped for the night. A message was also sent us from Dr. and Mrs. Mason, regretting they were unable to attend the meeting owing to the illness of the former. *Sheemōn* and other Karen teachers, earnest and thoughtful looking men, represented their venerable pastor, while a troop of about fifteen bright, cleanly dressed, and intelligent-looking girls from Mrs. Mason's school, accompanied their relations and friends to the meeting instead of being in the train of their beloved mistress. Although disappointed in being deprived of the society of the worthy pastor and his wife, we were glad to have an opportunity of seeing what the Karens would do when left entirely to themselves.

After proceeding for about an hour, chiefly through elephant grass, we reached a small picturesque place known to English residents as the "*Seven Pagodas*," which, according to Burmese lore, is noted for two Pagodas, which it is said were built by *Asoka** some *three hundred* years before Christ. Then turning to the right, our road took us through some magnificent forests, in which trees more than 150 feet high are common.

Amongst those deserving of special notice were *Kanyin* or wood-oil tree, two kinds of oak (*Quercus Lappacea* and *Amherstiana*), a wild chesnut tree (*Castanea ferox*); three kinds of nutmeg trees, the cinnamon (*Cinnamomum iners*), the sappy kanazo (*Pierardia sapida*), toon (*Cedrela toona*), and the Pegu upas (*Antiaris ovalifolia*), besides several curious parasites with ribband-like stems, a foot broad.

The march was a delightful one, as the trees, forming a canopy overhead, effectually shaded us from the heat of the sun.

The spot chosen by the Karens for our camp was picturesque in the extreme. A semi-circular glade of some thirty yards square, under the shadow of three or four forest giants, was carefully cleared, and neat huts for the accommodation of ourselves and our retainers, were built within easy distance of a beautiful stream known as "*Thouk-yay-gat*," because a Burmese king drank of the water thereof, but which used to be more appropriately called "*Mya-khyoung*," or emerald stream, from the tint given to its waters by the reflection of the evergreen forests

* See chapter on "History of Toungoo."

that overhang its banks. As it became dusk, the Karens made huge bonfires, partly on account of the cold, and partly to scare away wild beasts, for, although none have done mischief in this neighbourhood lately, still, the fact of a tiger trap having been passed on our way, as well as an officer's pony having been devoured by a tiger, some time ago near our halting place, were sufficiently suggestive of the necessity of taking reasonable precautions. After seeing that we were comfortably settled, the Karens made arrangements for bivouacking for the night, but before retiring, they all assembled in a convenient place a little apart, and led by Pastor *Sheemōn*, sang a hymn, followed by the Doxology, in a most creditable manner.

With no other accompaniment than the musical ripple of the neighbouring stream, they gave out their song of praise in the temple they had found in the depths of the forest, with an earnestness and singleness of heart, quite inspiring.

"Not to the domes where crumbling arch and column,
Attest the feebleness of mortal hand,
But to that fane most catholic and solemn
Which God hath planned.

"To that cathedral boundless as our wonder,
Whose quenchless lamps the sun and moon supply,
Its choir the winds and waves, its organ thunder,
Its dome the sky."

After a good night's rest, we were summoned an hour before daylight, which gave us just time to pack up bag and baggage, and enjoy a cup of chocolate by the remains of the bonfire, before starting on our travels again.

By getting under weigh thus early, the beauty of the scenery was enhanced, although our path lay at first through the same description of forests as we passed the previous day.

The distance to *Lookladen* might have been accomplished without halting, but the Karens, fearing we should be tired if we attempted to do so, thoughtfully built a rest-house half-way, and we, nothing loth, consented to halt there for breakfast. Our route after this, followed the bed of a stream, which we crossed more than twenty times, and early in the day we arrived at our destination.

The people of the village were evidently on the look-out for us; for long before we arrived, they came out to meet us headed by their pastor; and then began an ordeal, which, even subsequent use, never reconciled us to; we refer to the custom introduced by the American missionaries of shaking hands. Of this we had the full benefit on this occasion, for every one in the village, from the tottering blear-eyed grandfather to the wee baby swathed in a cloth and slung on its mother's back, put out his or her hand (just as an educated dog "gives the paw") as we passed by, and as several of the community evidently belonged to the family of the "great unwashed," and in their persons practically demonstrated the evils attendant on a want of attention to cleanliness, the ceremony, which, in the estimation of these simple people, almost amounts (as suggested by one who knew them well) to an article of faith, was, till a "happy thought" suggested the use of gloves, to us a positive infliction. It struck us too, that the mere fact of the

Karens being nominal Christians, should not give them the privilege of shaking hands with Government officers and others, who, consistently with either custom or propriety, could not rightly extend the same courtesy to Burmese or other people of inferior social standing to themselves.

Next morning the village put on quite a gala appearance, for numerous petty traders had come from the plains with beads, gaudy handkerchiefs, looking-glasses, needles, thread, matches, &c., and had erected a small bazaar with a double row of booths, which seemed to be much appreciated by the hill people. We made several investments therein; and, by giving little presents to the different chiefs and their wives, made considerable progress in their goodwill at a very moderate outlay.

At about 10 A.M., the people assembled in a commodious bamboo building which had been constructed for the occasion; and, shortly afterwards, we were invited to attend. There were about three hundred persons present, the men being arranged on one side and the women on the other. All were seated on mats spread on the ground. At one extremity of the building a slightly raised platform was conveniently placed for those who were about to address the meeting, or otherwise take part in the active business thereof; and on this platform were arranged benches for the chiefs, as well as chairs for our accommodation. From statistics which were afterwards furnished us we ascertained that representatives from forty villages attended.

Pastor *Sheemōn*, who, on the previous annual meeting, had been selected to inaugurate the present

proceedings, rose, and saying "Brethren, let us sing to the praise and glory of God;" gave out a hymn in which nearly all the company joined. The singing which was led by the girls, taught by Mrs. Mason, was remarkably good, and would have been creditable to many a village choir in England. An extempore prayer followed, after which the pastor read a few verses from the Bible, and gave a short, apposite, and eloquent discourse on his text, pointing out the necessity of praying that the Almighty might vouchsafe to shed His Holy Spirit on all flesh, and specially bless their proceedings.

When Pastor *Sheemōn* sat down, it was proposed and unanimously carried that he should act as chairman of the meeting. No better selection could have been made for this office, for he exhibited business proclivities of a rare order, in introducing the different subjects mooted by himself and others in a few well-chosen words; and, in causing the different resolutions come to by the assembly, to be then and there recorded by secretaries, whom he had nominated by a show of hands, and to be disposed of regularly and in order, after much more rational discussion than often obtains in more civilised communities.

The following resolutions were proposed by the Chairman, and carried unanimously:—

I. That two of their pastors be secretaries to record proceedings.

II. That two other pastors should read the reports from the different villages which have sent delegates to the meeting.

III. That a committee be nominated whose

business it shall be to exhort "*transgressors*" to abandon their wicked ways.

IV. That a second committee of three be appointed to select a fit place for next year's meeting.

V. That a third committee select a person to inaugurate proceedings in the next assembly.

VI. That two pastors be deputed as messengers to the different Christian communities which have not sent representatives to the meeting, to tell them what has taken place here.

After these preliminaries the Chairman called on one of the pastors already nominated to read the reports from the different out-stations. As all these were made out in precisely the same fashion, and, as a general rule, simply recorded the statistics already enumerated in this paper, the recapitulation became somewhat wearisome to us, although no doubt it was interesting to those who had a more intimate acquaintance with the people referred to therein. We were not sorry, therefore, when about half the reports had been read, to hear the Chairman propose that the disposal of the remainder should be postponed till later in the afternoon.

At the request of the chiefs we briefly addressed the people in Burmese, the Chairman translating our remarks with great nicety and readiness into Karen, for those who did not understand Burmese.

We contrasted, with congratulation, the aspect of present affairs, which exhibit such a marked advance in the social, religious, and moral condition of the Karens of the Toungoo district, with what obtained only a few years ago; for

then the people embittered by blood-feuds, which had existed in some cases for many generations, were at continual war with each other. The inordinate use of spirits, and consequent almost chronic drunkenness inflamed their worst passions levelling them even below the brute beasts. Acknowledging, it is true, a supreme spirit, the great God and Ruler of the Universe, but believing He had forsaken them, their religion, if it could be so called, was one of fear and not of love, for they gave themselves up to a degrading superstition, deprecating with offerings the wrath of the tutelary demons of the hills, streams, and forests, and with only vague views of a future, ignored the idea that anything they might do would influence that future.

Now, however, the devoted exertions of Christian missionaries, as well as the firm and conciliatory policy of Government, with a view to the amelioration of their hitherto degraded condition, have borne good fruit; for where the blessed light of Christianity has shone, the people have relinquished their bitter blood-feuds, as well as the use of intoxicating spirits, the primary cause of much that was to be deplored in their character, and have evinced in the most practical manner, by liberal subscriptions towards the maintenance of teachers, schools and churches, their deep interest in the cause of religion and civilization. These wonderful results, we added, were hailed with delight by all friends of Christian missions, as well as other philanthropists, who still continue to evince the most lively interest in the Karen people, and we further exhorted them

not to be " weary of well doing," but to persevere in the good way they had chosen.

The Chairman, after this, again addressed the meeting, and remarked that he was sorry to find from the reports of one of their committees that although the people had last year promised with one accord to send their children to school, many parents had failed to carry out their promises.

He admitted that in some cases there was more difficulty in this respect than in others, especially as regards poor or invalid people who were dependent on the exertions of their children for the daily duties connected with the house or fields, still he hoped that parents would do their best to enable their children to profit by the schools, and he therefore exhorted the people to renew the promise made last year. And while on this subject, he called their attention to the state of some of their chapels and schools, and asked the people to pledge themselves to see that these buildings were kept in proper repair.

Both suggestions were put in the usual way, and unanimously agreed to.

The Chairman having invited the pastors and elders to make any remarks that might suggest themselves, several resolutions, whose object was to ensure the welfare of the community were submitted, and carried *nem. con.*

After another short address from the Chairman followed by prayer, the people were dismissed, and many of them started the same day for their homes.

We left much impressed with the decorum and order that had been observed during the whole pro-

ceedings, and with the business-like way everything had been done, which would have been creditable to these poor people had Dr. and Mrs. Mason been present to help them with suggestions, but marvellous when we consider that the details were originated and carried out by them without such aid.

On leaving the village next morning, our road first took us through extensive plantations of the areca palm (*areca catechu*), irrigated by means of bamboo ducts and other channels by which the bright clear perennial streams that abound in this part of the country are cleverly and usefully diverted. And it is no doubt owing to this careful system of irrigation that the areca nuts from this region are so highly prized. The areca nut, wrapped up with a species of lime and other condiments in the leaves of the piper betel, is extensively used by the Karens, Burmese, and other peoples of the East. In default of a watch it is also often used to compute time.

Thus with a Karen or a Burman to say, "as long as it would take to chew a quid of betel," or to "boil a pot of rice," is sufficiently near the truth for all practical purposes, although perplexing in English courts when an alibi, or other issue depending on time, has to be proved.

The betel vines, which in the lowlands are trained over a trellis work of bamboo, are, on the hills, made to climb over the gnarled trunks of forest trees, which have been left standing within a convenient distance of the villages, with their lower branches lopped off on purpose. "Karen boys and maidens," says Dr. Mason, "engage in these leaf harvests

with great zest, and it is not uncommon for young men, in seeking companions, to enquire who are the most agile climbers of the *Poolah* or betel leaf trees."*

The village where our meeting took place is situated about the middle of the region inhabited by the *Mawnepghas*, a small tribe found on the hills immediately north of the *Youk-thwa-wa* stream, which divides the Toungoo and Showé-gyen districts, and on the left bank of the Sittang river. *Mawnepgha* according to some Karens, signifies "persons led captive," and was applied to this and other tribes who paid taxes to the Burmese Government. "It is fatal to this derivation," says Dr. Mason, "that several large villages that paid taxes in the Paku district, never had this name applied to them." †

Mr. Cross seems to think that the *Mawnepghas* are related to the *Pwo* family, having the strong nasal accent peculiar to the Pwo dialect, which is also extremely guttural, but Dr. Mason classes them as a sub-tribe of *Sgans*.

The people, with but few exceptions, have embraced Christianity, and are industrious, quiet, and orderly.

They cultivate a comparatively large area of rice, and pay some attention to the culture of cotton, from which their women weave strong and durable clothing for home use.

Immediately after quitting the environs of the village a steep ascent took us to the brow of a hill,

* Mason's "Burmah," p. 495.

† "Burmah," p. 83.

where we involuntarily paused to rest ourselves, as well as to admire the scene we had left behind. Far below us, but standing out clearly from the rest of the landscape, was the village we had just left; the sun had just shown himself over the shoulder of the hill on which we stood, and lit up with brilliant effect the flat bamboo roofs of the houses, as well as the little chapel with its triple roof (borrowed from the Burmese), which backed by a graceful cluster of the giant bamboo, added not a little to the beauty of the middle distance, to which an additional charm was lent by a back ground of gently undulating hills, sufficiently inclined towards the village as to give us an exquisite peep of the Sittang Valley, bounded by the range known as the Pegu Yomas some *thirty* miles to the west. After making this ascent the road was comparatively easy till within a quarter of a mile of *Own-daw-byay* our next destination, when we had another rather stiff hill to mount. We were, however, repaid for our trouble; for the village, which is situated on a narrow ridge some 3,000 feet above the sea, connects two of the inferior ranges of a congerie of hills in this part of the district, and thereby commands most superb views of the valleys to the west and the east.

We were most kindly received by the people, who placed their school-house at our disposal, and had a bath-room and cook-house prepared for our use.

The assistant pastor or curate, probably from his knowledge of Burmese, was deputed to do the honours of the village, instead of the pastor and chief, who were absent, and acquitted himself well.

Zealous in the matter of hospitable cares, he not only selected a fat porker from under one of the houses, but when it was dragged out by a man simply clad in a garment which seemed a compromise between a nightshirt and an English carter's smock, our clerical friend, with one well-directed stab in its neck, inflicted by a long knife he carried in his hand, soon put a stop to the squeaking expostulations of poor "piggy," who was discoursing anything but sweet music in the High Street of the village, in which we were strolling, without any expectation of, and certainly with no wish for, such a catastrophe. For although we do not object to pork when "properly educated," the conditions under which the "unclean animal" is domiciled with the Karens, or suffered to roam near their villages, are not such as to encourage fastidious tastes to include the flesh of Karen swine in their dietary system. We therefore carefully eschew it, but there were many in our company, fortunately, who had no such scruples, and did ample justice to the curate's hospitality.

Next day being Sunday, the people had Divine Service at their chapel three times, exclusive of the usual morning and evening services, observed in all the Christian villages among the Karens, one being conducted in Burmese for our edification. The pastor was by no means so eloquent as our friend *Sheemōn*, still his extempore prayer and discourse did not suffer in comparison with some ministers we have heard.

Finding that some of the pastors in this locality had some difficulty in procuring port wine for the administration of the Holy Sacrament, we were glad

to be able to make some acknowledgment of their civility to us by giving them a few bottles. This would obviate, we trusted, the use of Bass's pale ale, which, in default of the orthodox wine, was, we hear, in good faith taken advantage of by a pastor not far from this, when celebrating the Lord's Supper.

Our informant, who was an interested spectator of the proceeding, could not, he said, refrain from respecting the honesty and single-mindedness of the pastor, as well as communicants, although the fact of seeing the minister uncork and pour out bottled beer into tumblers, appeared at first ridiculous, if not profane, in a place of worship. On leaving *Own-daw-byay*, we returned to Toungoo, making a short *dêtour* by Pastor *Sheemōn's* village, knowing that this would gratify him.

Omens.—One of the villages where we proposed to encamp on our way, we found had been deserted. Many of the houses had been dismantled, and the little property they contained had been carried off; but some of the people, in the hurry of their exodus, had left some of their household goods behind them, to be removed at leisure. An old cock, which had evidently evaded capture at the time of flitting, resenting, as it were, being disturbed, as he was about to settle himself comfortably to roost on the roof of his master's dwelling, flapped his wings and somewhat arrogantly challenged us, but was ignominiously knocked from his vantage place by a well-aimed blow of a fire billet, to be subsequently utilized for soup.

In the meantime, a lean and miserable cur, the

recognised guardian of the place, thinking discretion the better part of valour, fled on the first appearance of strangers, and carefully ensconcing himself at a safe distance from the new comers, howled miserably, secure in his immunity from utilisation in any way.

It was nothing new to us to see this desolation such as we have described; for, on occasions of small-pox, measles, or other epidemics, the Karens invariably abandon their villages, believing that segregation of human beings, as with cattle, is far more efficacious than any other remedy.

In the case of the hamlet we are speaking of, however, a far less tangible excuse was given for deserting it. A barking deer, it was alleged, had come into the village and "barked;" and, as this was considered a very bad omen, the elders had encouraged the people to leave the village, lest some calamity should befall them. The Karens are peculiarly addicted to omens. Their divination by fowls' bones, which we have described elsewhere, affords an instance of their extreme credulity in this respect. But if we were to investigate the subject of belief in omens, it would most probably be found that many ignorant people of the most civilized nations have prejudices every whit as foolish as the most barbarous tribes.

Cæsar and other writers* record, that the ancient Saxons held that it was unlucky for a labourer to meet a hare when he was proceeding to his work. Their descendants outlived this superstition; and in

* "Lepus quoque occurrens in via infortunatum iter præsagit et ominosum."—"Alex. ab Alexandro," lib. v, c. 13.
See "Trans. Eth. Soc. London," vol. v, p. 164.

case of an encounter of this kind just now, the ill-luck would most probably be on the hare's side, if the labourer were armed with any missile. The canny Scotchmen of the same period, with some method in their madness, considered it a bad omen only when they did not catch the hare thus met; for from Dr. Browne we learn that, "if they observed a deer, fox, hare, or any four-footed beast of game, and did not succeed in killing it, they prognosticated evil."*

To this day, in Ireland, meeting a weasel under certain circumstances is considered unlucky, and with reference to some parts of England, in olden times, Melton, in his "Astrologer," tells us that it is a very unfortunate thing for a man to meet early in the morning an *ill-favoured man* or *woman*, a *rough-footed hen*, a *shaghaired dog*, or a *black cat*.

The crash of a falling tree, the cry of an otter, the sight of a snake or a scorpion, or the sound of a woodpecker tapping, is sufficient to deter a Karen from taking a journey, as was the case with the ancients.

The Caledonians thought it unlucky for a bare-footed woman to cross the road before them, and to avert the calamity that such an omen betided, they seized her and drew blood from her forehead, whereas if they met an armed man they believed that good was portended.†

"The woodpecker is said by the Karens to be the ghost's dog, employed by the shades to hunt game, hence it is a bird of ill omen, and when a

* See Dr. Browne's "Hist. of the Highlands," p. 130.

† Ibid.

Karen hears it scream he cries out: 'Woodpecker shun me afar off—shun my house, shun my road, shun my way, shun my field, shun my garden, shun the roof of my house, shun my place, shun my stream, shun my brook, shun the place where I draw water, shun me, keep afar off, go thine own way, thine own road.'" *

Here in Britain a single magpie, like the woodpecker with the Karens, prognosticates evil, for what child does not know the doggrel—

"One for sorrow, two for mirth,
Three for a wedding, and four for a birth."

But if we were to seek for analogies we might go on *ad infinitum*, for the ancient civilisation of the East corresponds with that of the West in this particular, as well as in many others.

Wherever we went we constantly had applications for medicine, especially quinine, which the Karens have much faith in.

Castor Oil.—Accustomed as we were to administer remedies for all the "ills that flesh is heir to," our slender stock of simple medicines had sensibly diminished when a venerable patient suffering from old age applied to us for relief.

At the risk of our reputation for a knowledge of medical science, we candidly confessed our inability to prescribe for his complaint. But as the old man was very anxious that we should experiment upon him, we yielded to his importunity by administering him a dose of castor oil, believing that it could do him no harm, and hoping that we would thereby deter similar applicants. Our anticipations in the latter respect were, however, without founda-

* Dr. Mason, "J. A. S. B.," vol. xxxiv, part ii, p. 205.

tion. In the morning we awoke to find ourselves famous! For soon after early dawn a confused murmur of voices attracting our attention, we got up to ascertain its cause, and on appearing were beset with numerous and vociferous applications from a crowd of men, women, and children, beseeching us to let them have some of the wonderful medicine we prescribed the previous evening. Each held up a cup, a betel box, an old cocoa-nut-shell, or the first utensil they could lay hands on, in the hope of securing some of the precious fluid before it had all been dispensed. The whole of our supply, consisting of two quart bottles, quickly disappeared, without satisfying numerous applicants, who, like Oliver Twist, asked for more; while one old woman, who, in default of a cup, received her share in the palms of her hands—chary of her prize, refused point blank to allow one of her disappointed neighbours to have a "lick!" With this incident in our memory, and from subsequent knowledge of the peculiar taste of the Karens in this respect, we can readily credit the story told of a well-known officer, who, on giving an entertainment to some hill Karens, substituted castor oil for sherry and bitters as a zest before dinner!

Conclusion.—Our ten days' trip was one to which we shall ever look back with pleasure. We enjoyed ourselves thoroughly, and were glad to see for ourselves that good honest work has been done among the Karens, and that there is every prospect of a glorious future for them if they only persevere in carrying out the noble work of civilisation and evangelisation which has so happily been begun.

CHAPTER XII.

Among the Tsawkoo Karens.

In that "debatable land," situated near the great watershed of the Sittang and Salwen rivers, a few tribes still exist, who more or less retain their ancient practices, and occasionally give trouble.

Among these the Tsawkoos are the most notorious. Inhospitable towards strangers, and addicted to fighting among themselves, they excited much aversion as well as terror among their more peaceably disposed neighbours, so that none valuing their lives ever cared to enter, much less to make themselves acquainted with a country where each man's hand was against his fellow, and casual visitors were looked upon as lawful prey.

In the beginning of 1869, we paid a visit to the Tsawkoos with the twofold object of bringing those wild and hitherto impracticable people to their proper bearings, in respect to their normal habit of levying "black mail" on travellers, and of opening out a good and safe road for traffic between Toungoo and Karennee as well as the Shan States.

Recent inquiry had elicited that toll had been demanded by the Tsawkoos on cattle and laden porters passing through their country, and so long as they were satisfied with small gains, no objections

appear to have been made to their demands; but, emboldened by this and the comparative independence they enjoyed from their isolated position, the Tsawkoos became more exacting, even resorting to force when travellers refused to comply with their extortionate demands; and, as a climax, so far took the law into their own hands as to make a raid on Karennee traders, who were bringing down a large herd of cattle to Burmah, and carry off forty-six head, by either driving the animals into dense forests or causing them, by prick of spear or sword, to jump over precipices, and leave their carcases to be picked up at leisure.

Patient and uncomplaining as the Karennees had hitherto been under small inflictions, the iniquity of this affair was too much for their equanimity; so, on arrival at the head-quarters of the district, they reported the matter to us. We at once took action by sending up an assistant, with instructions to demand satisfaction, and as he obtained promises from the chiefs of restitution in the matter of the stolen cattle, and was afterwards met by assurances, and apparently reliable proof, that the difficulty had been arranged by a solemn compact between the parties aggrieved and the Tsawkoos, it was considered that the results of his mission were satisfactory.

It was, however, elicited, on further inquiry, that the Tsawkoos had done nothing in the way of making reparation for their recent depredations; and having ascertained at the same time, from Messrs. Bunker and Vinton, American Baptist Missionaries, who had been lately passing through the country,

that they had been subject to illegal exaction on the part of the Tsawkoos, we lost no time in proceeding to that portion of the district.

Hearing that the Reverend Signor Biffi, Préfet Apostolique of the Italian Mission, was about starting for Layto, a small village about thirty miles north-east of Toungoo, where he has just established a missionary station, we gladly availed ourselves of his company so far on our journey, and on arrival there received a warm welcome from his assistants, the Reverends R. Tornatore and S. Carboni. We found it advisable to wait at Layto for a day or two, to give time to the Tsawkoo chiefs to meet us at a rendezvous on the Thouk-yay-gat stream, one day's journey off, and accepted with pleasure the hospitality of the worthy fathers in the meantime.

Although they have been located here but a short time, they have thoroughly won the confidence and affection of the people, and notwithstanding the great difficulties under which they labour in being obliged to learn Burmese, as a vehicle for the study of Karen, they have already made considerable progress, in that they have established a school, and have daily exercises in the vernacular.

The Karens have built a neat chapel and schoolhouse for the missionaries, which are beautifully situated on a rising ground surrounded by an amphitheatre of hills, about 3,000 feet above the sea.

These buildings, like the houses the inhabitants live in, are of the most temporary description, for, owing to the system of cultivation that obtains on these hills, the ground is not worked for more than three years, and is afterwards allowed to lie fallow

for five or six years more. The people are, therefore, compelled to move their dwellings, in order to be near their fields, and cannot afford to build substantial structures. The fathers hope in time to improve this wasteful habit of husbandry, in view to induce the people to build more permanent locations; but we fear that it will take very many years before the former can induce their followers to imitate the terraced gardens one sees among the industrial peoples in Switzerland and Italy.

After two days' pleasant sojourn at *Layto*, we proceeded to the rendezvous, accompanied by the Reverend Signors Biffi and Tornatore, and found that the Karens had built us a commodious hut on the confluence of two streams, selecting a spot which in sylvan beauty vied with the most picturesque scenes in this naturally favoured land.

Another travelling party of Karens had arrived before us and had arranged themselves for the night under the spreading branches of a large tree close to the water, by placing their sleeping mats in a circle with their property, consisting of four or five kyee-zees or drums in the centre, which they said they were taking to sell among the neighbouring tribes.

Among the most valued possessions of the hill Karens is the *kyee-zee*, consisting of a copper or spelter cylinder of about a quarter of an inch in thickness, averaging about two feet in length and of a somewhat greater diameter at one end, which is closed with the same kind of metal, the smaller end being left open. They are ornamented in a rude style with figures of animals, birds, and fish, and

according to size and volume of sound, are valued at from £5 to £50.

"On the outer circle are four raised frogs, as the figure of the cat sometimes surmounted the ancient sistrum. Whether the sound of the instrument is intended to emulate the voice of the frog or not must be left to conjecture, for no one can give any reason for the frog being there."*

"They have" (says Dr. Mason), "distinctive names for ten different kinds, which they pretend to distinguish by the sound."

In the settlement of their quarrels, and in the redemption of captives, the indemnification always takes the shape of a *kyee-zee*, or more, with perhaps a few buffaloes or pigs as make-weights, just as in more civilised countries a concession of territory, and perhaps some men-of-war is insisted on.

To such an extent does the passion for the possession of these instruments predominate among the more secluded tribes, that it is said "instances are by no means rare of their having bartered their children and relations for them."†

"A superstition," says Mr. O'Riley, common to all mountain tribes, which he had met, "that the deep-sounding note of a monotoned instrument propitiates the presiding nats (genii) of the mountains, and averts evil from them, is a reasonable enough cause for such a propensity to possess them, and those tribes who have the greatest number are regarded as the most powerful. In all their gatherings, whether for peaceful enjoyment or preparatory to an expedition

* Dr. Mason, "J. A. S. B.," vol. xxxvii, part ii, p. 128.

† O'Riley, "Journ. Ind. Arch.," vol. ii, No. 4, note 57.

to arrange some intertribal blood feud, the *kyee-zees* are brought forth and beaten, and as the resonance echoes back from the deep gorges of the mountain glens, they regard it as the approving answer of the Spirit, become excited by drinking a spirit rudely distilled from rice, and a scene of the wildest revelry ensues."

By other accounts it would appear, that its "music hath charms to soothe the savage breast;" for, "when a good kyee-zee is struck, the Karens say the music softens the heart, and the women weep for the friends they have lost, or from whom they are separated. The possession of kyee-zees is what constitutes a rich Karen. No one is considered rich without them, whatever may be his other possessions. Everyone who has money endeavours to turn them into kyee-zees, and a village that has many of them is the envy of other villages, and is often the cause of wars to obtain possession of them."*

Lèlé, the chief of Layto, whom we had dispatched to summon the Tsawkoo chiefs, had already caused the attendance of several, and brought the remainder of the principal men with him next day.

Business began after breakfast, all the chiefs sitting round us with their followers; but at the most interesting part of the discussion, it happened that one of the numerous sporting-looking dogs accompanying the Tsawkoos gave tongue in the jungle; and as the people are passionately fond of the chase, nearly every one in the assembly, armed with matchlocks, spears, or dahs (swords), started off helter-skelter in pursuit of the game, leaving us with a few

* Dr. Mason, "J. A. S. B.," No. 37, part ii, p. 129.

old men, whose joints were too stiff to follow their example. This escapade resulted in the capture of a wild pig, but, as the consequent excitement precluded any chance of rational discussion that day, the meeting was put off *nem. con.* till the next, at the village of Mallapoolee, of which Kharo, the most influential man among the Tsawkoos, is chief.

We started early next day, and were met about half-way by a deputation from the village, consisting of all the elders, with a number of young men armed with muskets, cross-bows, spears, &c.*

They were accompanied as usual by their dogs, and on seeing us, fired shots, shouted, and otherwise testified their welcome. Many of these were wiry, well set-up, and straight-limbed young fellows, with less of the Mongolian type of feature than other tribes of Karens, but much darker than their neighbours the Gaykhos.

Their dress is scanty, consisting of merely a pair of short dun-coloured drawers, with red stripes, supplemented by a profusion of beads of many colours. Some had even chaplets of beads; and one young buck, who evidently considered himself somebody,

* O'Riley, when in this part of the country, was honoured with a cavalry escort. He says, "All the chief men of the surrounding villages had assembled to do us honour, each one riding a pony of very small pretensions to good looks or size, but whether owing to the spirit-stirring sounds of the brass instruments, or more probably the spirit which their riders had imbibed, they coursed with each other up and down the slopes, running madly after each other and cutting such cantrips as only drunken riders and drunken beasts can cut with impunity, and they so continued their performance until my arrival at the halting-place on a rising ground near the chief's residence."

had a small turban of red cloth with the maker's name, "Macguffie, Glasgow," emblazoned in gold letters on green ground, conspicuously placed in front—a certain proof that British trading energy was not to be baffled even in such an unpromising land as this.

On arriving at Mallapoolee we found the villagers busy building a hut for our use, but as it would have taken some time to finish it, we, nothing loth, accepted the hospitality of Chief Kharo, who kindly gave us up his house, reserving a side apartment for the accommodation of himself and several belongings.

A description of Kharo's house will serve generally for those occupied by the Tsawkoo Karens, who have some ten or twelve villages in this locality. The house is built on bamboo piles, with the floor raised some fifteen or more feet from the ground, and consists of a common hall in the centre, with three side-rooms, each containing its family hearth. These rooms are intended for the accommodation of the chief and his immediate family, as well as of his sons-in-law and their belongings; access being had thereto by a ladder drawn up at night through a trap-door in the hall floor.

The shape of the mansion is oblong, rounded off at the corners, the roof being well sloped to keep out the heavy rains. The poultry find resting places in the rafters, while the pigs and other live stock luxuriate in pens below; and when we add, that the presence of much more objectionable inhabitants was evinced by the friendly offices cheerfully undertaken in public by the people for mutual relief, we some-

what regretted that we agreed to have a Tsawkoo chief for our host.

Although our anticipations as to certain discomforts were amply realized, owing to the too obsequious attentions of the obnoxious animals to which we refer,* still we were somewhat recompensed by having an opportunity of seeing Tsawkoo domestic life, which we otherwise should not have observed.

The reception-room, owing to our advent, had been removed to one of the side-rooms, and here Kharo had a levee which lasted all night. The old chief was rather taciturn, and his guests were not particularly communicative. The absence of intellectual entertainment was, however, apparently fully compensated for by the presence of a small tub or barrel of khoung (a spirit distilled from rice), in which were inserted several reeds, used like sherry-cobbler straws, to which (and this was often) the guests put their lips when, like Mrs. Gamp, they were so "dispoged."

After breakfast, the discussion, which was so suddenly brought to a close on the previous day, owing to the sporting proclivities of the members of the committee, was resumed, to be interrupted occasionally by the exhibition of another weakness of this singular people, of invariably ignoring the laws of *meum* and *tuum*, whenever they have an opportunity.

This was exemplified by several attempts on the

* Our bodies appeared as if they had been whipped with nettles, and the Préfet was disabled from writing by a rat-bite in the thumb.

part of the younger members of the community to pilfer the looking-glasses, beads, &c., which we had placed near us for distribution after business was over. But as this propensity was well known to our people, a strict watch was kept, and a hue and cry raised when anything disappeared, to be followed in every instance by the capture and condign punishment of the offenders.

In spite of these and other interruptions, more or less ludicrous, matters were at last satisfactorily arranged. It was decided that, as the Tsawkoo chiefs had no immediate money assets available, Lèlé, Chief of Layto, should pay one-half of the value of the cattle stolen in the Tsawkoo country, the chiefs faithfully promising to reimburse Lèlé. The chiefs also agreed to refrain from molesting travellers, in the way of illegal exactions or otherwise, and to further by every means in their power the objects of Government, in having a good and safe road for free traffic. On the other hand, we agreed on the part of Government, to appoint Lèlé as agent for the collection of a tax, as follows :—

For an elephant, one rupee, or two shillings.

For a buffalo, four annas, or sixpence.

For a bullock, two annas, or three pence.

For a laden porter, ditto.

The proceeds of this tax to be rateably shared by Lèlé as well as the chiefs of the country, with a view of reimbursing them for their trouble in clearing the road, scarping it, and reducing the inclines where necessary, and, in fact, making it as practicable as possible for travellers.

As the Tsawkoos have no faith whatever in

written documents, it was arranged that this agreement should be ratified in the manner held by them to be most binding. This was by "drinking truth," a description of which ceremony may not be out of place. A silver bowl embellished with the signs of the zodiac, in that raised work peculiar to Burmah, was filled with *khoung*, a liquor something like whisky, which has already been noticed, and placed on the ground, the chiefs of the different villages, as well as Lèlé on the part of the Government, sitting gravely in a circle round the bowl. A gun, a sword, and a spear, were then produced, and portions of the steel therefrom carefully scraped into the spirit. These weapons were then inserted into the bowl, and simultaneously held by all the contracting parties, who severally agreed to abide by the terms of the contract noted above, and drank off the *khoung* in witness thereof.

Freemasonry, Covenants, &c.—The Karens have established forms for making covenants of friendship and reciprocity treaties of various kinds with other tribes or peoples, which savour of the archaic civilization to which so many of their customs belong, rather than to the more recent civilization which prescribes the necessity of documents duly signed and sealed for arrangements of this nature. The blood of bulls and goats, of swine and dogs, of fowls and men, mixed with whisky, and occasionally diluted with water, and drank with the usual accompaniments of excessive feasting and revelry, which often degenerate into the wildest orgies, is with them of far more efficacy than the more matter-of-fact pens and ink, sealing-wax, and

parchment, which are considered such important elements in the covenants of Western nations.

Mr. O'Riley and other writers have given us interesting details of these ceremonies, in which they were either observers or partakers, and refer to them as "treaties of amity," "brotherhood," "drinking truth," and the like, all of which appellatives, though fully suggestive, are evidently adopted from the Burmese. To Dr. Mason we are indebted for a description thereof from a Karen stand-point, in which he aptly compares the most binding ordeal to "Masonry, without its secrets."

In this "Freemasonry" there are, he says, three grades—*Mghe*, *Tho*, and *Do*. The most sacred is the *Do*. The obligations of the *Tho* are less than those of the *Do*; and of the *Mghe* less than the *Tho*.

When two persons wish to become related to each other, the one who is at home takes a hog or a fowl, and cuts off the hog's snout or the fowl's bill, and rubs the flowing blood on the legs of the other, and sticks on them some of the feathers or down of the fowl. Then they consult the fowl's bones, and if they give a favourable response, they say, "We will grow old together, we will visit each other's houses, we will ascend each other's steps." The visitor next kills a hog or fowl, and performs the same rites on the other. On consulting the fowl's bones, he says, "If the fowl's bones are unfavourable we will die separate, we will go separate, we will work separate, we will not visit each other's houses, we will not go up each other's steps, we will never see each other but for a short time." If the re-

sponse is favourable, the two have entered into the relations of *Do*, and consider themselves pledged friends, bound to help each other as long as they live in any way that they may require assistance, and they no longer call each other by their proper names, but by that of *Do*. In seasons of famine or scarcity, a *Do* helps his colleague to the extent of his ability, and if a man is abused and evil spoken of, his *Do* defends him, saying, "That man is my *Do*, and to speak evil of him is to speak evil of me, I do not wish to hear it." Many multiply their *Dos* in different villages, so that wherever they go they may be sure of hospitable treatment; and if their enemies plan a foray upon them, and the project becomes known to a *Do*, they are immediately informed of it. It is said that the *Dos* very rarely quarrel, but remain faithful to each other, and the institution seems to exert a very favourable influence in wild Karen society.

Treaty of Peace.—Sometimes treaties of peace are ratified by contending tribes that have been at feud, by assembling round a large and durable tree in the forest, and cutting notches therein.* Libations of the "peace-making water" (mentioned elsewhere) are drunk, imprecations are invoked, and speeches made on both sides, the text of which is that they shall hereafter act in harmony, and associate with each other as brethren. "Beyond this notch in a tree," says Dr. Mason, "no monuments of peace or war are known to exist."

After the ceremony, presents of silk handkerchiefs, looking-glasses, needles, thread, and common

* "J. A. S. B.," No. 37, p. 161.

beads, were given to the chiefs and their wives, and were duly appreciated by all the community; so much so, that we were promised an operatic performance and dance, with a full-dress company, if we consented to part with a portion of the remainder of our treasures of this kind. This we gladly agreed to do, and the people kept their word.

Soon after sunset we repaired to the only piece of level ground in the neighbourhood, which was chosen for the entertainment. We found that our chairs had been made to answer for the boxes or dress circle, while the orchestra, consisting of an harmonicon, flute, and flageolets, and a nondescript instrument intended to serve as a drum, had been hastily improvised from bamboos, cut in the adjacent jungle. Some thirty to forty of the young men and maidens composed the corps dramatique, while the rest of the villagers perched on eminences around, or seated on the ground, composed the audience.

Some little time having been taken by the musicians to tune up their instruments—a proceeding involving as much care and anxiety to them as to their more tutored brethren in art at the Royal Italian Opera, or La Scala at Milan, the performance began by a grand flourish from the full band, which to our perhaps uncultivated taste appeared as if all the performers were endeavouring to make as much discord as they could by playing different tunes; an impression which, by-the-by, our hosts would probably feel if they heard "Israel in Egypt," as played at the Handel Festival, or other great triumph of music, in which the people of Western countries take such delight.

After a short overture, the performance commenced by all the dancers holding hands and moving backwards and forwards in slow time, a gradual advance being made in crab fashion to a certain distance, and then they retraced their steps. In time to the music, whether grave or gay, they endeavoured, with indifferent success, to make their movements accord, now moving their arms up and down like children at play, and anon holding them simultaneously to the rear, they gravely "curtseyed," and occasionally gave a "whoop," ludicrously reminding one of the exclamations which are found so exhilarating in the Scotch reel or Irish jig, and producing a result which was at once novel and amusing.

The dress of the men has already been described, and no change was made therein for the occasion, except that they put on a few more beads.

The women, however, donned their remarkable head-dresses, which are worn on such rare occasions, that not even the Karens of other tribes belonging to our party had ever seen them. This head-dress resembles a brimless hat made of basket work, embroidered in fanciful patterns with beads of several colours, and is about eight inches in height. It has no top, but this omission is concealed by three or four plumes made of the brilliant feathers of birds found on their hills. These are fixed in front of the hat, and, at a short distance, have not an inapt resemblance to the plumes of a Highlander's bonnet, while pendant from behind are strings of beads and green-beetles' wings, which accord well with the rest of their ordinary costume, which is also very peculiar. This consists either of the white and red short tunic worn

by their neighbours to the north and north-west, or one of darker hue, which they particularly affect. Below they wear a short petticoat, reaching half-way down the thigh, blue with red stripes. Round the neck are three or four coils of lead, of the thickness of an ordinary finger. On their arms they have brass coils reaching to the elbow; on their legs brass greaves of a thicker quality, reaching from the knee to the ankle, and weighing some seven pounds, all of which is supplemented by a profusion of beads, fastened on in every place they conveniently can be. The *tout ensemble*, assisted by its attendant accessories, being strikingly effective and picturesque in the torch-light.

If our interpreters are to be believed, we were being favoured with the Tsawkoo version of "Don Giovanni," and we must admit that the confessions of their Leporello seemed to be as much appreciated by the audience as those of his distinguished prototype in Mozart's famous opera are by more refined critics. Lest, however, it should be thought by a censorious public that the Tsawkoos have plagiarised from the work of the famous composer, we hasten to assure our readers that the Tsawkoo language has not as yet been reduced to writing, and that the people knew no other tongue.

With this defect in their education, we could hardly expect *librettos*, and although our interpreters did their best to give us the substance of what was going on, we felt they hardly did justice to the subject, in that the dialogue was conducted in a dialect with which they were imperfectly acquainted,

and they were obliged to translate it to us in Burmese, which is not their mother-tongue.

We therefore soon tired of what was at first somewhat interesting from its novelty, and accordingly made good our exit, after having duly distributed the promised presents among the performers.

Our companions, by their affable and winning demeanour, quite won the affection of these people, who, having heard of the good done to their countrymen, belonging to the *Bwé* tribe, were anxious to participate in these benefits. They received earnest appeals from *Perreekee*, and other lesser chiefs, to take up their abode with them, promising to build them dwellings and school-houses, as well as to do their utmost in making them comfortable.

The fathers promised to visit them, and if possible to extend their mission to these villages, at which the people seemed much pleased.

The religion of the Tsawkoos, if it may be so called, consists entirely in attempts to propitiate by sacrifice the malignant demons, and scenes of wild revelry ensue on these occasions.

When the people of a village or the members of a household are engaged in one of these orgies, they put up a bow with an arrow ready fitted to the string, or some other sign, to indicate that there is "no admittance," or that "trespassers will be prosecuted according to law," and these insignia are scrupulously respected.

Judging by the success that the Baptist missionaries have had with the neighbouring tribes, and the anxiety the Tsawkoos evince for instruction, it

is hoped that these superstitious rites will soon be abandoned. The political difficulties in connection with this strange people have been much softened owing to our visit; and as the Italian missionaries intend to occupy the country as soon as they can, it is trusted that the civilizing influences that will then be brought to bear on the border tribes will produce fruit.

Two men in the crowd that always surrounded us while in Tsawkoo land, attracted our attention by their very peculiar appearance. They were profusely ornamented with beads of various colours, and wore short breeches and armlets of brass like the *Tsawkoos*. But here the similarity ended, for they were distinguished from all other Karens that we have met by having their hair cut quite short, leaving an elf lock on each temple. The Burmese, from this circumstance, call them *Goung-dōn* or "bald heads," and sometimes *Beloo* or "Monster," from their hideous appearance.

The Red Karens call them *Taru*, the *Gaykhos* know them as *Lahta*, but *Kha-hta* is the name they give themselves. In spite of their frightful appearance, they have the reputation of being a very quiet and inoffensive people, and according to Mr. O'Riley, are the most interesting of the whole of the Indo-Chinese races which exist in this region. In his report on the people, he says it is surprising to find a community of civilised beings existing in the centre of some of the most degraded specimens of humanity, who appreciate virtue and good and practise them for their own sake alone, and who are considered by those races as the only existing excep-

tion to the vitality and operation of the evil principles of human nature.

They have, it is said, the reputation of being able to withstand the temptations of over-indulging in strong drink, which they have the sense to know is the root of all evil, and they are also noted for the comparative decorum observed by them in relation to the intercourse allowed between the sexes—boys and girls being domiciled separately. Mr. O'Riley was told that their "sense of shame was so acute that on being accused of any evil act by several of the community, the person so accused retired to some desolate spot, there dug his grave and strangled himself." Dr. Mason suggests that "if this be correct, the custom indicates a connection with China."* And, indeed, China and Japan are the only other countries apparently, in which the peculiar custom, known as "the happy dispatch," by which a condemned person is allowed to be his own executioner, is prevalent.

Mr. O'Riley, who saw several of the tribe was of opinion that in comparison with the Karennees, "they presented so great a difference of feature and form of head as to make them clearly a distinct race." But, judging from the specimens we saw, we could not distinguish any such marked peculiarities.

Mr. O'Riley fancied their language was distinct from *Shan Toungthoo* or Karennee, but he confesses that he failed "to catch the pronunciation of the names they gave to the different objects," while Dr. Mason, who gave some attention to the language,

* "Working Man's Life," p. 400.

was of opinion that it was "remarkably near the *Pwo* Karen."

Their social customs in reference to births, betrothals, marriages, and deaths, do not differ materially from those observed by the Red Karens, and some of the tribes near our northern boundary.

Betrothals of children are the rule, and in funerals the corpse is rolled up in flattened pieces of the giant bamboo, owing we presume to the scarcity of timber suitable for making "dug out" coffins, which all the Bwé tribes affect if possible.

It is affirmed that they do not weep for those that die, because death being inevitable it is simply useless to mourn! This primitive people have no idea of a future, and the supplication they offer to the Genii loci on the pinnacles of their hills, is to obtain benefit to avert evils in this life only.

They are to be found north-east of the *Gaykhos*, and within easy distance of Karennee, and were estimated by Mr. O'Riley to number from 3,000 to 4,000 souls.

Adjoining the *Tarus* or *Lahtas*, is another tribe of Karens noticed by Mr. O'Riley,* of equally primitive habits but far inferior to them in their sense of decorum. Thus, while the *Tarus* sedulously separate the sexes from infancy, and permit their cohabitation only with the consent of the parents of the female after arriving at the age of pubescence, the Yindalines, it is said, not only allow their children to do as they please so soon as they come to the years of discretion, but actually send them to

* "Journ. Ind. Arch.," vol. ii, No. 6.

shift for themselves, just as the birds turn their young out of the nest so soon as they can fly.

As a general rule, therefore, it is impossible for the people to know in what degree of relationship they stand to each other, as they, like the inhabitants of the northern island of Burmese cosmography, have no test by which they can guide themselves in this respect. In this island, owing to the women abandoning their new-born babes soon after birth, the inhabitants are unable to ascertain who are their parents, the more so as all are of the same shape and figure and of the same golden colour. Hence it is provided, that when a couple, moved by reciprocal affection, wish to unite in wedlock, they should withdraw themselves under a certain beautiful tree. If this lowers its branches and covers them round with its leaves, it is a sign that they are not near relations, and, consequently, the marriage is completed. If, on the contrary, the tree does not lower its branches, they consider it a proof of their consanguinity and abstain from proceeding any further.*

The state of social degradation obtaining among the *Yindalines*, which is so revolting to our sense of the fitness of things, tended, in the opinion of Mr. O'Riley's informant (a Yindaline) to promote their well-being, but Mr. O'Riley believed it was certain that it was a cause of the visible falling off in their natural physique compared with that of the other races† he had met with in that region.

Owing to the females leaving the breast un-

* "Sangermano," p. 91.

† "Man. Journ.," O'Riley.

covered, as well as from the lower intellectual and moral standard of the people as compared with their neighbours, Mr. O'Riley considered they were a distinct tribe, although they seemed content to remain in humble dependance on the Red Karens, by whom they are employed in working the Teak forests, and in performing all work of hardship and exposure which the dominant race decline to undertake.

Of their origin and traditions Mr. O'Riley could learn nothing further than the bald statement that they came from the north many years ago.

They numbered then about four hundred families, but appeared to be under a process of absorption on the part of the Red Karens.

The part of the country inhabited by the Tsawkoos lies between Bwé territory and the Great Watershed. The soil is deep, and rich, and produces the usual cereals and esculents.

Hoar frost is found in December and January, and judging by our short experience of the country, and from what we heard from the people on the spot, the climate would appear to be salubrious. Fever and bowel complaints are, however, prevalent at some seasons of the year. Goitre is common, and cutaneous diseases of the worst kind prevail.

Medical treatment, of which they are entirely ignorant, would doubtless alleviate much of the sufferings they now endure.

The inconvenience they often felt, owing to the want of salt need no longer obtain, if they encourage traders to pass through their territory, as the Red Karens invariably take large quantities of salt to their own country from the Toungoo markets.

The people are well armed, and never move far from their houses without some weapon of offence. Many of them use the cross-bow with poisoned arrows. The tree from which this poison is extracted is, they say, only known to a few, but, it most probably is the Pegu Upas (*Antiaris ovalifolia*) which is found in many parts of the district.

Poisoning, says Dr. Mason, is not uncommon among the Karens. They purchase some of their poisons from Shan traders, and procure others from their forests.

They also use poison fangs and stones which are supposed to cause the death of their would-be victims, after certain ceremonies have been gone through with them.

But it is satisfactory to find that the possession of such poisons, real or imaginary, are held in abhorrence by the people. If a man is caught with poisons in his possession, he is sometimes tortured by being bound in the suspense for some days, or he is sold into slavery. It is even considered a meritorious deed to put a poisoner to death.

It is hoped that the conditions of society in Tsawkoodom have improved since our visit, and that the necessity of bearing arms and of using poisons will soon be things of the past, and the more intercourse they allow with more civilised peoples, the quicker will this come to pass.

That the Tsawkoo route is the most natural course for traffic to take was then apparent by the number of Karennees that took advantage of it in spite of the unenviable notoriety the inhabitants enjoyed, and has since been proved by the great

success of our present negotiations, resulting in the subsequent development of trade in cattle, cutch, salt, *ngapee* or fish-paste, piece-goods, &c., between British Burmah and Karennee, as well as the Shan States.

As the arrangements we proposed could be carried out without the least expense to Government, and would, with the more subtle influences and example of Christian missionaries, tend to the moral and physical advancement of this, hitherto, degraded people, they were submitted with confidence for the favourable consideration of Government, which was pleased to convey its acknowledgments to us, in the most flattering terms.

CHAPTER XIII.

A Summer Tour in the Bwé-Karen Country.

In the hot season of 1869, when the arid heat of the plains made the English cantonments almost intolerable, we were not sorry that duty and pleasure combined, rendered it desirable that we should take up our residence in that portion of the district, inhabited by a tribe called *Bghai*, or *Bwé*, the least known, although not the least important of the three great families into which ethnologists have found it convenient to divide the Karen race.

Bghai, the English equivalent of the Karen spelling, as rendered by the missionaries, is somewhat arbitrarily required to be pronounced *Bway* or *Bwé*. We propose, therefore, to adopt the phonetic spelling.

The Bwés are the most numerous of the three families, and comprise in their body, the *Kayas* or Red Karens, Tsawkoos, Padoungs, Hashwies, Prays, and other minor clans.

The Bwés proper are found on the left bank of the Sittang, immediately above Toungoo, south of the Gaykhos, having the Tsawkoos and other cognate clans to their east.

Those located on the affluents of the river wear short drawers like the *Gaykhos*, with radiating red

lines near the bottom, while those south of them wear a white armless sack-like garment, with perpendicular bands fashioned like those patronized by many other tribes.

The missionaries have accordingly distinguished them by the names of Pant *Bghai* (Bwé) and Tunic *Bghai* (Bwé) on account of these peculiarities in their dress.

Similar designations are given them by the Burmese who also call them *Leik-bya-gyee* (Great Butterfly) and *Leik-bya-gnay* (Little Butterfly) probably from some fancied resemblance in their dress to these insects.

The appellation Bwé is borrowed from the Sgan Karens, and the people recognise the term so far as to apply it with an adjective to sub-tribes, although they have no distinctive name for themselves excepting *Pieya*, their word for man.

Thus the "Gensbracata" speak of the tunic wearers as *Bwé-kă-tai*, or "Bwé at the end of scarcity," food being more abundant in their localities; the latter returning the compliment by calling their neighbours *Bwé-kă-hta*, or "Upper Bwés," because they reside north of them; while both clans call the Red Karens *Bwé-ma-htai*, or "Eastern Bwés."

We fixed on the village of Layto, which is situated at an elevation of three thousand feet above the sea, and within thirty miles of the town of Toungoo, as our summer retreat, because its airy situation promised to afford us an agreeable change as well as the pleasant society of the Italian fathers, who have a missionary station there.

We were further induced to select Layto, as our friend the Préfet Biffi kindly volunteered to superintend the erection of a house we directed the Karens to build for us; and so charmed were friends who had just come out from England with the idea of a "trip to the hills," that they joyfully consented to accompany the writer and his family into the Karen wilds. Arrangements were made accordingly.

"Ramprasand," a splendid tusker, was ready at the appointed time to carry the ladies and children in that most convenient of all howdahs, shaped like an Irish car.

The mahout had taken advantage of the occasion to embellish his charge's head and trunk with various Arabesque designs in chalk; and clothing him with a many-coloured carpet and other gay trappings, betokened that his services were required for something less exciting than his ordinary duty as shikar or shooting elephant, when simpler paraphernalia sufficed; for while he was celebrated for his staunchness and courage when the dread roar of the tiger, or the impetuous charge of the bull bison, made less steady animals waver, he was no less distinguished as one of the best travelling elephants in the Commissariat Department.

As most of our baggage and other belongings had already been sent on to Puddé, where we were to encamp for the night, we managed to make a start quicker than is usual on the occasion of a first day's march, and arrived at our destination in good time, all charmed with what was to some of our party their first essay in jungle travelling.

Ramprasand at first did not belie his character for steadiness and discreetness, but afterwards indulged in such eccentricities as to cause some alarm to the ladies, and to bring on himself condign punishment from his mahout, supplemented by abusive language in connection with his female relatives to the third and fourth generation.

This unwonted behaviour was occasioned by our riding too closely in his rear, and caused him to exhibit a weakness to which the most courageous elephants are prone, however used they may be to ponies. The cause of his uneasiness having been removed, he pursued the even tenor of his way, and restored the equilibrium mentally and bodily of his riders.

The people of the village managed very nicely for us, having, by a judicious disposal of clean mats and *kullagās*, or curtains, made of gaudy handkerchiefs sewed together, and of pieces of chintz, illustrating in bright colours incidents in the life of Gaudama, which they borrowed from a neighbouring monastery, made the old zayat, or rest-house, very comfortable, and as our servants had been equally attentive to their duties, dinner was soon served, ushered in by that inimitable soup, which Madras cooks enjoy the secret of making to perfection on the march, but which they never succeed in equalling when surrounded by all their home appliances.

We rose betimes next morning to enable the elephants to get under weigh early, and also the better to enjoy the march, the ladies getting on their ponies by way of a change, and our little girl being carried in a light Sedan chair on the shoulders of

two of Mrs. Mason's Karen youths, who gaily tripped along much to E.'s satisfaction, who was highly delighted with her conveyance and very proud of her "little men."

Our road for the most part was through what the Burmese called *Eng-dine*, or forests composed of the *dipterocarpus grandiflora*, somewhat monotonous when unrelieved, as is usually the case, by other trees, but excellent for travelling purposes being smooth, hard, and free from undergrowth.

In the more rugged parts, the Eng gave place to the varied vegetation which is such a characteristic of this part of the country, interspersed here and there by belts of the giant bamboo, which having flowered and seeded that year, died in the effort, as is the case with all of the grass genus, and falling with a crash prone to earth in the more exposed parts, or lying for miles like a Brobdignagian hay-field beaten down by Brobdignagian hail or rain, effectually blocked up the ordinary roads, and by their withered and dismantled appearance afforded a melancholy contrast to the vivid evergreen forests that surrounded them. The elephants, however, soon made their way through the tangled masses, and opened out the roads, while our followers busied themselves in collecting the bamboo seed, which has the appearance of Patna rice, and is said to be very good to eat.

Halting during mid-day in a shady dell near a brook, called Karen stream, we pushed on in the cool of the evening to *Nga-moay-zayat*, so called because a zayat or rest-house, built by Nga-moay (long since gathered to his fathers), once stood there;

but the only thing left of this work of merit consists in a delapidated Buddhist flag-staff, surmounted by the sacred Henza, indicating, at any rate, that the place chosen by Nga-moay is one of singular beauty, as well as commodious for travellers, being well shaded by lofty trees, and close to a magnificent mountain torrent.

The Bwé Karens belonging to the neighbouring hamlets had renovated the little hut they had erected for the accommodation of the Préfet and ourselves the previous month, and having thoughtfully constructed neat bedsteads, tables, and seats from the giant bamboo, made it exceedingly comfortable.

The presence of English ladies and children was a source of wonder and delight to these simple people, who for the first ten minutes did little else than gravely stare at them ; but having been called to their duty by their chiefs, energetically assisted our retainers in making the necessary arrangements for the night, while one young fellow, who shot a jungle cock in a sportsmanlike manner within a stone's throw of our camp, gave us a welcome addition to our dinner, for which a bathe in the cool, clear brook hard by proved an excellent preparation.

Our guests were looking forward with some impatience to enjoy the beautiful mountain scenery of which they had heard so much, but for an hour or two they had to content themselves with a road bounded on both sides by forests, in which the view was necessarily limited, although there was still much to arrest the attention, for every turn in the path revealed new beauties ; flowering trees, endowed with a wealth of colour peculiar to these forests,

relieved with brilliant effect the somewhat sombre hues of the evergreen vegetation, helped here and there by what are called in higher latitudes autumnal tints, but which are here caused by Dame Nature discarding her extra clothing in the hot weather before she puts on her summer suit.

The *Dalbergias* again, with their white stems, so smooth and slippery, as to defy, it is said, the efforts of monkeys to climb thereon, and hence called monkey-crying tree (*Myouk-gno-ben*) by the Burmese, were prominent objects; not to mention the numerous orchids and ferns that were to be seen clinging to the trees in every direction; while near their roots a beautiful crocus, which is a sure harbinger of the rains, and known in the vernacular as *Pudessa*,* reared its modest head. Gigantic parasites hanging from lofty trees seemed like the appliances of a gymnasium for veritable sons of Anak, and made capital swings for the monkeys, which chattered and "swore" at us as we went along, while one remarkable creeper strangling three forest giants, with but little effort of the imagination reminded us of the famous Laocoon in the Vatican.

Before ascending the heights leading to Nature's picture gallery, we came to a huge granite boulder, some twenty feet high, in the care of whose tutelar deity all walking-sticks have to be consigned, just as in visiting galleries of art elsewhere, sticks and

* *Pudessa* is also the name of a wonderful tree to be found in the northern island of Burmese cosmography, "on which, instead of fruit, are seen hanging precious garments of various colours, whereof the natives take whatever pleases them best."—"Sangermano," p. 8.

umbrellas are left in charge of the doorkeeper, with this essential difference, that in the latter case we can get back our property by producing vouchers, whereas all the sticks left against this rock are recognised as legitimate perquisites of the guardian spirit. Not only the Karens, but the Shans and Burmese, deposit their sticks here for luck, just as we have seen frequenters of a "wishing well" in Ireland propitiate the presiding fairy by fastening little rags on an adjacent tree, or Hindoo pilgrims attaching streamers to the *ficus religiosa* with a somewhat similar object; consequently the guardian spirit of the rock has a large supply of alpenstocks to choose from, in case he wishes to take a stroll among the neighbouring hills in search of adventures.

To the north of this rock, and on the summit of a hill, is a still more remarkable boulder, said to be some sixty feet high, regarding which, legend has it that a fond but foolish maiden suffered herself to be enticed away from her friends by an ogre, who assumed for this purpose the shape of an attractive young man, and having her, as he thought, in his power, when they arrived at a lonely place on the mountain summit, threw off his disguise, and was about to devour her, when the girl prayed to a rival spirit, guarding the rock on which she stood, to save her; the spirit answered her prayer by causing the rock to shoot up from the level of the ground to its present height, and out of reach of her tormentor, who shortly left in high dudgeon. The damsel's protector escorted her home, but left the stone in its exalted position, as a lasting memorial of her folly as well as of her deliverance.

After passing these rocks, the road gradually ascended, and then took us up the face of a hill some 3,000 feet high, from the summit of which to our destination it proved very easy.

The Karens carried the ladies in chairs fastened to bamboos, and the latter were thereby enabled to enjoy the beautiful scenery which opened up before us as we slowly mounted from the valley.

We reached Layto in time for breakfast, and were delighted with the house the Karens had made for us, assisted by the good fathers.

The plan, for which we were indebted to our friend the Préfet, who took a great interest in its construction, was admirable.

It consisted of two commodious bedrooms, with verandahs and bath-rooms, raised on stout bamboo poles, some twelve feet from the ground, to which communication was had by a ladder on one side. Underneath was a pleasant room surrounded by lattice work to the height of three feet, but otherwise open all round.

Assisted by the taste and ingenuity of the ladies, this was soon made into a charming sitting-room and dining-room combined. Gay carpets spread over the mats, curtains hung here and there, the introduction of a few easy chairs, with a couple of tables covered with bright cloths, soon gave an air of comfort to our apartment, which was further tastefully adorned with rare and beautiful orchids and flowers gathered in the jungles. Within easy distance of this mansion was our kitchen, on repairing to which, in our tour of inspection of the surrounding premises, we found Govindoo the cook, who had preceded us in a

Col. McMahon, Del.

Hanhart & Sons, Lith. St Marcus Lane W.C.

HOUSE AT LAYTO (BWETRIP)

state of considerable alarm, owing to a tiger having looked in at the kitchen door the night before. We were at first inclined to believe that the tiger was simply the offspring of one of the hideous nightmares to which the old cook was subject after indulging in ardent spirits, but the footprints of the beast being still discernible, proved that on this occasion it was no phantom of the imagination.

The Karens assured us that this tiger was a harmless animal that frequently roamed about in the vicinity of the village, picking up a stray dog now and then, but doing no other harm; still the servants were not quite satisfied with the explanation till experience proved the truth of what the Karens said.

Within easy distance of Layto a band of Karennee Caterans had, a few days before our arrival, attacked a body of Shan traders who were returning to their own country from Rangoon. The Shans resisted, and a determined fight seems to have taken place, for three Shans were killed and three wounded so severely as to be unable to proceed, while several of the Karennees were wounded, if not killed, but they managed to carry off those hurt in the fray. Baway, the East Asian Commissioner, and Lèlé, the Chief of Layto, at once went in pursuit, but the Karennees had got too great a start of them, and managed to get into the debatable land of the Sawkoo country before traces could be found of them, and consequently nothing could be done.

We went off to *Leppet-eng*, or Tealake village, to see the wounded Shans, but they were unable to tell us more than we knew already, and as there was

not the slightest clue to identify their assailants, attempt to discover the miscreants was hopeless.

The Karennee attack was one of those regularly constituted forays which are a recognised institution among all the tribes of the Bwé family. These latter have forays for plunder, for the sake of vengeance, and to recover debts, and here a few remarks thereon may be acceptable, as any account of the Bwés would be incomplete without some notice of their forays.

All are systematically organized, but those for debt or alleged claims are not usually such formidable affairs as the raids that owe their origin to a desire for vengeance on account of the death of friends or for love of plunder.

Many a time as we sat round our evening bonfire have we talked over bygone days with the chiefs and elders, who are now foremost in encouraging the mild teachings of Christianity, but who, only a few years ago, were ruthless marauders, notorious for their reckless blood feuds and savage forays.

They gave most interesting accounts of what they did and what they suffered, which helped to enliven the hours till bed time most agreeably. We recorded the information at the time, but subsequently ascertained that most of the details in connection with the Karen system of forays have already been published by Dr. Mason. In the following notice we have, therefore, availed ourselves of his papers to supplement our own notes.

When a chief determines to attack another village, he kills a buffalo, bullock, or pig, according to his means or the importance of the enterprise, and

invites all whom he wishes to join in the foray to the feast. Those who accept his invitation are bound to assist in the projected undertaking, and to each his proper place is allotted, with a view to ensure success by a well-directed combination.

But before the inauguration of this festival, which is never held till the augury of fowls' bones has pronounced in favour of the expedition, the avenger of blood kills a hog or fowl, and taking therefrom bits of the heart, liver, and entrails, minces and salts them, and rolls the mixture up in a leaf. After prayer to the lord of heaven and earth and other tutelar deities, to vouchsafe their aid, by confounding his enemies and otherwise taking action in his favour, he entrusts this parcel to two spies, with instructions to proceed to the enemy's village and collect all the information they can with a view to attack, if feasible; and further, desires them to accept his enemy's hospitality, and on finding a good opportunity to drop the mixture in his food, so that it may cause him to lose all self-possession and fall an easy prey to the avenger. On the report of these spies, action is either taken at once or postponed, according to the prospect of success or otherwise.

As the Karens never declare war, and endeavour to take their enemies by surprise, a successful foray is characterised by fearful atrocities. The advanced guard rushes into the house in which, according to Bwé custom, each community dwells,* and cuts down all who oppose it, while the remainder of the

* A Bwé village (so called) consists of a single house, or perhaps two, with numerous compartments.

party surround the building and intercept the fugitives. Infants and decrepit persons are slain, as they say it would be useless to take them away, while children and adults are often massacred and mutilated in a wantonly cruel and diabolical manner.

Before leaving, the house is fired and the attacking party decamp with their captives, whom they hold to heavy ransom or sell as slaves. "It is instructive," says Dr. Mason, "to see how the same act looks when viewed from different stand-points. The forays of the wild Karens appear to civilised people little better than unqualified robbery and murder; but a Karen looks upon them much as Europeans do suits at law, and the execution of judgments by the sheriff."*

The forays for debt are arranged in somewhat the same fashion, but death rarely occurs unless the debtor or his friends offer resistance.

The creditor simply forms a *posse comitatis* of his neighbours, and waiting his opportunity, suddenly pounces on his debtor with perhaps two or three members of his family, and causing him to be brought before him, reads him a homily on the iniquity of not liquidating his just debts, and calls upon him to pay up with heavy interest, or incur the penalty of being sold as a slave. If the debtor has assets, his ransom is easily effected at the intercession of his friends, but the negotiations for the redemption of captives taken in the intertribal blood feuds are more serious matters, and are always entrusted to an elder of a neutral village.

* "J. A. S. B.," vol. xxxvii, part ii, p. 145.

After delivering his credentials, the messenger explains the object of his visit to the head of the feud, and if recognized as an "ambassador of peace," his legs are smeared with the blood of a hog, which is killed in honour of the event. After being well entertained, the envoy is sent back with the legs and head of the hog, and these are accepted by those who engaged his services, "as sealed documents that his mission has been successful."*

When the preliminaries have been satisfactorily settled, the heads of the feud enter into a treaty of peace, which is done by drinking what they call "the peace-making water," composed of the blood of a fowl, a hog, and a dog, mixed with water and seasoned with the filings of a spear, a musket barrel, and a stone. The parties to the arrangement sit opposite to each other, and having divided the head of the unfortunate dog that has been sacrificed, in twain, each slings one of the halves round his neck, and drinking the mixture, they solemnly interchange promises of good will, and invoking terrible curses on themselves, say, "Now that we have made peace, if any one breaks the engagement, if he raises up the feud again, may the spear enter his breast, the musket his bowels, the sword his neck. May the dog devour him, the cat devour him, the stone devour him. When he drinks spirits may it become the water that oozes from a corpse. When he eats a hog may it become the hog which is eaten at his funeral feast."†

On our way we passed a little ravine literally

* Dr. Mason, "J. A. S. B."

† Ibid.

puddled with marks of deer and other game, the foot prints of a tiger being also visible.

The Karens, taking advantage of the passionate fondness of deer for salt, had put a quantity in holes which they had dug within a few feet of an ambush near a spot to which they were in the habit of resorting, when in want of venison. The villagers were very anxious that we should sit up that night for game, assuring us that we should not be disappointed, but having a horror of this unsportsmanlike practice, we declined the honour.

Baw-ay, however, who had no such scruples, and who was only too glad to have a chance of getting venison for his followers, posted himself the same evening, and in about an hour shot a magnificent stag sambock, or elk (*Rusa hippelaphus*), which came up, he said, almost to the muzzle of his musket.

One of our first excursions was to a hill belonging to the same ridge as Layto is built on, which we unanimously called "Orchid Mount," from the numbers of orchids to be found there.

It afterwards became a favourite resort, and we seldom returned without being well laden with these beautiful plants. Orchid Mount would make an excellent sanatarium for temporary resort in the hot weather, as the summit consists of a narrow strip of table land about one mile in length, sufficiently extensive for building accommodation, with a delicious climate compared with the plains, from which it is distant but two days' march.

Our first day was further pleasantly diversified by visiting the fathers, whose house and chapel was

situated on an eminence close to our house, examining their school which they have lately established, and in making acquaintance with the people of the village.

In the evening, while we were trying to account for the fact of the absence of games of any kind among the Karens, we determined to put to a practical test whether this deficiency arose from a natural defect in their constitution, or from want of opportunity, and set the boys to a game of leap-frog. They fully entered into the spirit of the game, and before many evenings were over, so successfully acquitted themselves in the higher branches of the art as to be advanced to the exciting pastime of "high cockalorum."

Many of the missionaries who endeavour to promote the physical, as well as the intellectual and moral advancement of their pupils, have succeeded in introducing games among the boys, but it appeared to us that the latter evince a want of spirit in their pastimes in comparison with Burmese lads, who rival English school boys in this respect.

Next day the three Italian gentlemen joined our party at dinner; a fat hill goat was sacrificed for the occasion, and pronounced by every one to be as good as grain-fed mutton. There is something in the herbage of the Karen hills that has a wondrous effect on the goats that live thereon, making their flesh of a very different flavour to that of their congeners of the plains.

A reciprocal arrangement was at the same time entered into, by which the fathers agreed to come over occasionally in the day time, as well as joining

us in our walks so as to improve their knowledge of English, while the ladies gladly accepted their aid in brushing up their acquaintance with Italian.

Several people from the neighbouring villages came into Layto, and most of them sat down at a little distance from our verandah to have a look at the white ladies and children. E. won all their hearts by her funny ways, and vain endeavours to induce the quaint and sober little Karen children to join in a game of romps.

The women had donned their gayest apparel, some wore the half white and half red jackets peculiar to the Gaykhos, others the red Bwé tunic, while most of them had on their heaviest lead necklaces, as well as brass greaves and arm-pieces, supplemented by a profusion of beads.

Even the men who, except on rare occasions, never condescend to make any addition to their toilet, had bound round their unkempt heads bits of book muslin we had given them previously. Evidently there was something unusual going on, so we followed the stream to ascertain what it was. On entering the village, we found that the neighbours had assembled at one of the principal houses, at which a kind of Dutch concert was going on—a volunteer band playing on the reed pipes, harmonicans, and bassoons, with a *martellato* accompaniment of *kyee-zees* or drums, while the general company, stimulated by frequent libations of *khoung*, energetically beat the "devil's tattoo" on the sides of the houses, by banging them with sticks, and at the same time danced, sang, and otherwise gave vent to extravagant merriment. We naturally concluded

that a wedding or some such festive ceremony was going on, and we were rather taken aback to find that we had come on the funeral of one of the inmates of the house.

The friends of the deceased, we were told, had met for the twofold purpose of condoling with the survivors, and exorcising the malignant spirits; but having drowned dull care in the bowl, the fun became as fast and furious as in an Irish wake, and at last degenerated into an orgie, which the demons they had come to scare might have thoroughly appreciated.

All this time little or no notice was taken of the corpse, which lay in a coffin dug out of a single tree; this rested on a platform, and was covered with handkerchiefs and sheets from the gaze of the by-standers.

Little tables made of bamboo had been placed at the head and the feet of the corpse. On the former were arranged pork, chicken, and other eatables, with spirits, for the use of the guardian spirit of the deceased. On the latter rested a vessel containing fire, the significance of which we did not ascertain.

A miserable fowl, tied by the leg under the coffin, was placed there, we were told, soon after the deceased was confined thereto, and would be killed when the procession moved off to the burial-ground, and buried with the corpse, but they were unable to acquaint us with the origin of this custom. The Santals have a similar usage at their funerals, as they nail a cock through the neck to a corner of the pile, or to a neighbouring tree.*

* "Annals of Rural Bengal," p. 209.

Early in the afternoon the funeral procession was formed, the people exhibiting a subdued demeanour more befitting the occasion than the drunken revelry of mid-day.

The corpse was consigned to its last resting-place on the side of a hill, close to the public road, the mourners and other friends ranging themselves round the grave, with bamboos divided lengthwise in one hand and little sticks in the other; the former they thrust into the grave before it was filled in, and exhorted their own guardian spirits* to come away therefrom, pointing out an easy way of exit by dragging the sticks along the grooves of the bamboos. The bamboos were then thrown away to get their guardian spirits temporarily out of harm's way, in case they should inadvertently be buried with the corpse in the process of consigning earth to earth; and when leaving the place, the bamboos were carried off, and the spirits entreated to accompany them. A little house was afterwards erected over the grave, on which were hung baskets and other property of the deceased, while the head, feet, and other refuse parts of the buffalo, killed for the occasion, were left for the sustenance of the attendant spirits.

Padre Tornatore, who has some knowledge of medicine, and by his successful treatment of several cases of fever and bowel complaints has given a people, who have no doctors and no medicines, some confidence in the efficacy of assisting nature by medical science, instead of leaving her to herself. His fame as a "great medicine" has been also en-

* See subject of guardian spirits in chapter on Mythology.

hanced by the success of a surgical operation on a lad whose leg had been broken by the kick of a buffalo, and he held quite a levée at his little dispensary daily.

Among his most constant visitors was the father of this boy, a funny little man of about five feet in height, chief of the neighbouring hamlet, who daily reported progress in regard to his son's case, and apparently considered it a part of his duty to sit down and look at us for half an hour or so, if he did nothing else.

The little fellow, who had not honoured us with his visit for some days, came one morning earlier than usual to apologise for his absence. His wife had, he said, presented him with a son, and as is customary with his people, he had to undertake her duties.

On questioning him further, we ascertained that on the birth of a child, whether boy or girl, the father proceeds to the well and draws water for use in the lying-in room. He then boils it, kindling the fire with fuel of his own cutting, and enters the house by means of a new ladder, which he must make himself, carrying the hot water in buckets. The mother washes the child if able, otherwise the mid-wife does so. The empty buckets are left in the room for three days, and are then taken away by the father, who descends by his new ladder, and then throws it away or breaks it, as it is unlucky for other people to make use of it. The buckets, which are placed under the house, must not be used for other purposes for six days.

Dr. Mason, in reference to the customs of some

clans, says, "if the child be a girl, the father goes through the pantomime of performing a woman's labours, beating paddy in a mortar, and the like. If a boy, he spears a hog, and seizing the first man he meets, wrestles with him, to indicate what his son will do when he comes to manhood."

Our informant made no allusion to the wrestling process, perhaps inwardly acknowledging the absurdity of even the bare mention of feats of strength in connection with such an insignificant specimen of humanity as himself.

Another constant visitor was a fine-looking young fellow, rejoicing in the name of "Fierce Tiger," whose personal appearance contrasted strongly with our diminutive acquaintance. He was tall and well proportioned, with a good-humoured and intellectual face, which he occasionally washed, and thus made himself conspicuous in the crowd of the unwashed with which we were surrounded. With a cheery manner, that made him a general favourite, he was, although he had arrived at the mature age of twenty-five, still a bachelor, and was consequently continually rallied on the subject, as early marriages are the rule with the Karens of all tribes. "Fierce Tiger," it appears, had fallen in love with his cousin,* the daughter of a neighbouring chief, known as the "Rising Moon," who reciprocated his passion, but the old adage in reference to true love verified itself

* From Dr. Mason we learn that the Bwés think marriages ought to be contracted among relations. They consider the relation of first-cousin undesirably near, and that of third-cousin too remote, while second-cousins are deemed most suitable for marriage. "J. A. S. B."

in this case, as the parents of the damsel had betrothed her in infancy to one of their neighbour's sons, who insisted on the bargain being adhered to in its integrity.

The augury of the fowl's bones, however, had as yet been unfavourable to the projected marriage, and the lovers were living in hope.

"Fierce Tiger" did his best to make "Rising Moon" break her engagement, but she knew well that her father discouraged the idea, as he had no wish to incur the expenses consequent on an action for breach of promise which his son-in-law. elect would be sure to bring against him, and she was further taught that want of duty to parents reaped its own reward in calling down the wrath of the God of heaven and earth on the head of the transgressors, by depriving them of all temporary blessings; so that while inclination called her one way, stern duty dictated an opposite course, leaving her undecided.

Should a couple who have been betrothed in infancy mutually object to the union when they arrive at marriageable age, matters are amicably arranged by the parents of the girl paying half the expense of the betrothal feast, which is provided by the boy's parents; but if either party refuse to carry out the promises made in their behalf by their parents, it is understood that the man loses all that was spent in the betrothal feast,* while the woman pays a fine.

* Dr. Mason says, "If a young lady is rejected by her betrothed, she is entitled to claim a kyee-zee for her head, another for her body, and a gong to cover her face for shame."—Mason's "Burmah," p. 83.

The Karens, as we have noticed elsewhere, believe that persons who marry carry out the obligations incurred in their behalf by their guardian spirits before they were born. Hence, when a match is broken off, the parents say, "Ah! their spirits did not consent, their guardian spirits did not make the agreement," while the young people sing—

"God and the Spirit,
Without their consent
No marriage is made.
God and the Spirit,
And with their consent
No marriage is stayed."*

When the preliminaries are arranged for a wedding, the bride is escorted by the elders of her village and other friends to the bridegroom's house, where all enjoy themselves in feasting and making merry, which seems to be the chief features of all their social customs, whether grave or gay.

Some of the people in our neighbourhood have apparently adopted the custom of the Burmese, inasmuch as the fact of a bachelor and maiden eating in public from the same dish is considered tantamount to the irrevocable "I will" in our service. But the indigenous custom is evidently the one described by Dr. Mason,† wherein two elders take a cup of spirits, which is called the "covenant drink," and one standing sponsor for the bride, the other for the bridegroom, mutually acknowledge the obligations incurred by the latter as man and wife.

* Dr. Mason, in "J. A. S. B."
† Ibid.

Each elder then offers drink to the other, and says, "Be faithful to thy covenant."

The parties concerned do not interchange any vows, but by their silence give consent to the utterances of the elders in their behalf, while, instead of the formula, "to have and to hold from this day forward, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, &c.," the people present take up the refrain, and say, "they are man and wife, and may live where they choose; they have food or no food, clothes or no clothes; they may live in peace, or fight and quarrel —no one will interfere. It is nobody's business but their own. No one has any right to control them."*

On taking a stroll through the village one evening, we came upon the elders engaged in investigating a case in which the accuser stated that another had cursed him.

The accused admitted the charge, but pleaded justification, in that the opposite party had given him serious provocation.

The only issue fixed by the court was, whether the defendant's plea was just or otherwise, for the Christian maxim, "Swear not at all," is with them "Swear not without cause."† Their traditions teach

* Dr. Mason, "J. A. S. B."

† "Cursing," says Dr. Mason, "is with the Karens an organized mode of punishment for crimes which cannot be reached in any other way. When a man will curse another deliberately he goes on to the verandah of his house, and curses him three evenings in succession. On the third evening he takes an expiring faggot, an addled egg, and the last droppings of the dishes, which are usually given to the pigs, and he says: 'May his life expire like this expiring faggot; may he be desti-

them that if with reason they imprecate evil upon others, the curse will have effect upon the cursed; but, if otherwise, it will roam about in search of the person to whom it applies; and if unsuccessful, the "Lord of the land and waters, the God of the heaven and earth, is displeased, and says to the curse, 'There is no reason why thou shouldst hit this man; he has done no evil, go back to the man who sent thee.'"*

The curse accordingly recoils against the man who uttered it, causing him to languish and die.

Owing to very contradictory evidence, the members of the court were divided on their issue, and were consequently unable to agree to a verdict; the case was accordingly dismissed, and the court dissolved.

Homicide.—Some days after this an incident occurred which serves to illustrate the peculiar notions of this people on the subject of homicide.

A young man had been killed in a drunken brawl, and as every man has his price among the Karens, the relations demanded the same from the persons concerned in the fight, waiving their privilege of blood for blood as laid down in their criminal procedure.

The accused resisted the claim on the ground that the deceased lost his life through misadventure while the whole company were drunk, and as there was no suspicion of malice on their part, they could

tute of posterity like this addled egg; and may his end be like this refuse of the dishes.'"—"J. A. S. B.," vol. xxxvii, part ii, p. 149.

* Mason, "J. A. S. B."

not be held responsible. The elders decided that as the complainant had nothing to urge against the plea offered by the accused, the offence with which they were charged came under the head of "general exceptions" in their law. The nice distinction of the framers of the Indian Penal Code, that "voluntary drunkenness is no excuse for crime" not obtaining in their code.

Although, then, by the strict letter of the law transgressors are exonerated for what they do under the influence of intoxication, as well as in cases where they can reasonably plead justifiable homicide, murderers are left to be dealt with by the family of their victims, who are considered to have a righteous claim as avengers. But terrible remorse, making life a burden, and the loss of all one cares for in this world, say the ancients is the lot of him who kills another without cause. They also predict that the murderer's fate is to die miserably, without kith or kin to perform his funeral obsequies, his body being left exposed to feed vultures and wild beasts. While of the lover of peace it is said, his house shall be established, and he will be blessed with a numerous and dutiful progeny; "his daughters will demean themselves with propriety, his sons will live happily, he will have no adversaries, he will have no enemies. The lovers of peace will live long and be prosperous,"*—a rough paraphrase of the words of David, "Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them, they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate."†

* Dr. Mason, "J. A. S. B." † Psalm cxxvii, 5.

The sky, which had been clear and bright on our arrival at Layto, now began to be dark and lowering, and the Karens therefore lost no time in covering our roof with mats, to make it as water-tight as possible, and in placing bamboo stays against the posts of the house, as a precaution against the effects of the violent though short-lived storms that herald the approach of the south-west monsoon. And soon had we occasion to be thankful for this forethought, when a violent thunderstorm that awoke us at midnight, accompanied by torrents of rain, practically tested the value of their labours.

The rain, alas! would not be denied, and came pouring in in every direction, but this was a comparatively small matter, causing merely temporary discomfort; the danger was that the wind would either bodily lift our fragile house off its supports, or bring it down with a crash.

Thanks, however, to the arrangements made by the Karens it stood the severe strain, although it shivered and bent as a reed in the wind; in short, as seamen always say when their vessel has almost foundered, it "behaved nobly."

The storm subsided as suddenly as it came, leaving us to repose as we best could in the few dry places to be found.

The weather, which had been pleasant before, was now positively delightful, and the atmosphere—hitherto lurid and hazy with the smoke of a hundred jungle fires, which as they wound up the sides of the mountains in the obscurity of night were not inaptly likened to the fiery dragons of mythological story—soon became beautifully clear, revealing, in all their

loveliness, many distant hills and vales that had been obscured, and involuntarily reminded the Italians of their own most beautiful land.

Reprisals.—We were glad to ascertain from despatches received from head-quarters, that the wife and children of a Burmese resident of the plains, who had been carried off by the *Shoungs*, on our northern boundary, in satisfaction of *akha*, or demand for compensation for the life of one of their relatives, had been given up in consequence of measures taken by us, and had returned in safety. The particulars of this affair will give some notion of the Karen system of reprisals.

A few months previous to the attack on his house, it appears that the Burman, when tracking a buffalo which had been stolen from him, picked up a knife which was claimed by a Karen, who, on this admission, was apprehended by the police on a charge of theft, but subsequently discharged. The Karen died of measles on his way home, and his relations at once made a claim on the Burman for *akha*, or compensation, on the ground that he was the indirect cause of the death of the former.

The Burman, confident in the protection of duly constituted authority, laughed them to scorn, although he was told by a Phon-gyee, or monk, that they intended to attack him. This report was soon verified, and in great distress he came to us to complain of the outrage, endeavouring, with tears in his eyes, to enlist extra sympathy by informing us that a baby, the joy of his household, was at the tender mercy of the ruthless marauders.

Suffice it to say, the Karens were given to under-

stand that proceedings of this kind could not be tolerated in British territory, and they had a more constitutional remedy if they deemed they had any claim. So the captives were given up, and the bereaved father had soon the happiness of embracing his family once more, and of finding that even the precious baby was none the worse for its travels.

This puts us in mind of a somewhat similar case in which the delinquents resided beyond our eastern frontier, and consequently could not be dealt with so summarily as our own subjects. Measles, it appears, had attacked a village in *quasi* independent territory between us and Karennee; and, as usual, an inquiry was made to ascertain what person, or which locality, was to blame for introducing this disease, which, with the Karens, often assumes the form of a violent epidemic.

A village under the British protection was fixed upon as the place from which the disease emanated. A demand was accordingly made on it for compensation, which was refused; a raid was then made thereon, and an influential man carried off for whom a heavy ransom was demanded. Circumstances which it is needless to detail rendered it advisable to adopt the "suaviter in modo" in this case, before assuming the "fortiter in re." A letter was consequently written to the offending chief, demanding the restitution of the captive, and hinting that we should have more to say to him in the event of his refusal. At the suggestion of the people who had complained of the outrage, two official seals were placed on this document to make it look more imposing, and whether owing to the potency of the double seal, or

to the influence of British power, or to both combined, we know not, but at any rate the prisoner was released with many expressions of good-will to ourselves, and to the intense satisfaction of his friends and fellow-villagers.

The system of *akha* or claim for compensation on account of real or fancied injuries which is such a distinctive feature in the social relations of the Karens, deserves special notice.

The Mosaic law which says "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth," and which awards the punishment of death to the shedder of blood, is fully appreciated in this system; and there is something reasonable in demanding satisfaction when some tangible cause of offence can be substantiated; but when the people, bowed down by a debasing superstition, step over the bounds of common sense, and ascribe misfortunes that may befall them to witchcraft, the evil eye, magic or other occult influence, it can be well understood what interminable vexations, as well as perplexing results, are involved in demands based on such imaginary wrongs.

Thus the principle of demanding a life for a life, or an equivalent in the shape of restitution, or heavy fine when the accused has been guilty of robbery, theft, slander, or the like, may rightly be conceded; but when it goes further than this, and the people give themselves up to an abject fear, that induces them to attribute their misfortunes to the machinations of supernatural agency, rather than to natural causes, it requires no great effort of the imagination to conceive the inevitable results.

Some of the people here are musical, and are fond

of playing an instrument called *htwai* in one dialect, and *nai* in another peculiar to these hills.

It consists of a gourd, in one end of which is inserted a mouthpiece, and in the other a number of hollow reeds or bamboos of different lengths pierced with small holes for modulating the same, and ornamented with red silk or cotton tassels.

The performer uses the mouthpiece like that of a clarionet, to the sound of which it bears not an inapt resemblance.

Dr. Mason recognised the picture of a Chinese "gong" or organ used by the Chinese mountaineers or *Miautsi*, which he saw in the "Sunday at Home," as precisely similar to the Karen instrument.*

In one of our evening rambles we came on the old site of the village of Layto, which had been vacated for the present site a few months before. We were surprised to find that not only building materials, but different household property in the shape of kitchen utensils, farming implements, bundles of silk and other valuables were left behind till their owners could conveniently fetch them.

This alone afforded a convincing proof of the truth of the report that the people in this neighbourhood are singularly free from the crime of theft, and act up to the teaching of the ancients.

They contrast favourably in this respect with their neighbours, the Tsawkoos, who, though they belong to the Bwé family, are reputed to be notorious thieves, whose only shame, if they confess to any, is to be found out and thwarted in their knavery.

The Bwé law as handed down by their elders is

* "Working Man's Life," p. 265.

particularly strict on the subject of theft. Honesty is impressed on them as the best policy, and they are encouraged to obtain their living by the "sweat of their face" rather than by fraud or theft, for much as they may strive to hide their wrong doings, their deeds, it is said, will find them out in the ordeals of diving under water and of ascending trees, and will be displeasing to the Lord of heaven and earth. Their credit for honesty will also be gone, for men will then say to them, "Once honest, ten times honest; once a thief, ten times a thief."*

Bwé law is lenient in the cases of those convicted of a first offence.

A tyro in the crime of theft was usually permitted to go free on his restoring the stolen property, and promising to amend his ways; but, to a confirmed thief, they showed no mercy, often selling him as a slave to strangers, so that they might have no more trouble with him.

Ordeals.—In cases of suspicion of theft, or when there is no positive evidence to sustain the charge, the Karens, like the Burmese, have recourse to certain ordeals to determine the guilt or innocence of the accused. They have the water ordeal, the tree ordeal, and some say the candle ordeal.

In the first the accuser and accused, in the presence of their friends, stand or sit up to their necks in water, with a plank placed on their heads.

At a given signal they are simultaneously immersed, and he who remains longest under water is pronounced the winner. If the verdict is against the defendant, he is adjudged to restore the value

* Dr. Mason, "J. A. S. B."

of the stolen property with heavy interest; if against the prosecutor, he has to pay damages for preferring a false charge.

In the second, a *Sterculia* tree is stripped of its bark, and the accused has to prove his innocence by climbing the slippery stem.

In the third, each party holds a lighted taper, and whoever keeps his alight the longest wins the case.

This last is almost exclusively resorted to by the Burmese. The tree ordeal may be said to be a *specialité* of the Bwé Karens, although it is seldom used; while the ordeal by water is largely affected by both Burmese and Karens, and many instances are recorded, wherein foolish and infatuated people lose their lives, by submitting thereto. This absurdly superstitious custom not only obtains among barbarous peoples, but is recognized in the criminal procedure pertaining to the *Hlot-daw* or Supreme Court of the King of Burmah, where the farce is carried out to a more ridiculous extent owing to the judges occasionally permitting the parties to provide substitutes, thereby defeating the original object of the ceremony, which no doubt was the exposure of the delinquent, who, burdened with a guilty conscience, was supposed less likely to have his wits under such control as to carry him through the ordeal satisfactorily.

An amusing incident relative to this indulgence occurred when we were at Mandalay in 1870.

A Persian trader accused a Burman of having robbed him, the latter denied the charge, and it was decided that the dispute should be settled by the

water ordeal. The wily Burman managing to obtain a medical certificate was permitted to nominate a substitute, and selected a professional diver.

The poor Persian, although willing to compete with his rival on even terms, naturally demurred against this arrangement, and contended that he should also be allowed the privilege accorded to the accused, but was either in such robust health or was unable to get a doctor with sufficient flexibility of conscience to assist him, so the judges refused his request.

The Persian appealed to us to assist him, and although we could not officially do so, a private opinion that we expressed in his favour was of sufficient weight to cause the judge to reconsider his refusal, and the man obtaining (we heard) the services of a Madrassee pearl-diver, fairly distanced his competitor, and won his case.

Another ordeal used by the Sgan Karens came to our knowledge on the occasion of a Burman having been robbed in one of their villages.

Circumstances proved that the theft must have been committed by some one in the village numbering twelve houses, so the chief decided that every householder should fetch as much bran as he could carry in his two hands together and throw it on a common heap, the object being to give the thief an opportunity of restoring his ill-gotten gains, by appealing either to his sense of shame or to his fears, without having to confess his guilt.

The experiment came to nothing in this case, although it is said to be often successful.

There was considerable excitement one day owing

to a man in a neighbouring hamlet having eloped with another man's wife. The man who was aggrieved submitted his complaint to the elders, but they declined to take up the case without our permission; this we at once accorded, because we could not of course interfere unless the husband took the initiative; and it was also desirable that a domestic matter of this kind should, if possible, be settled among themselves.

On inquiry, we were told that their practice in cases of *crim. con* is identical with the custom described by Dr. Mason, which is as follows:—The transgressors jointly purchasing a hog kill it, and each holding a foot of the animal scrape a furrow in the ground therewith, and pour the blood into the furrows. They then scratch the ground with their hands and repeat the following prayer:—"God of heaven and earth, Lord of the mountains and hills, I have destroyed the productiveness of the country. Do not be angry with me, do not hate me, but have mercy and compassionate me. Now I repair the mountains, now I repair the streams. May there be no more failure of crops, no more unsuccessful labours, no more unfortunate efforts in my country. May the paddy be fruitful, the rice abundant, the vegetables flourish."*

This prayer is enjoined, because they are taught by their traditions that incontinence is punished not only by bringing down every possible evil on the heads of the transgressors, but by displeasing the God of heaven and earth entails a general calamity,

* Dr. Mason, "J. A. S. B."

which is only to be averted by sacrifices and prayer on the part of the offenders.

On submitting to this ordeal, and paying a fine to the plaintiff, a decree *nisi* is passed by the elders, who act as judges of Divorce Court, after which, but not before, Bwé society recognises the transgressors as man and wife, while the bereaved party is of course at liberty to marry again.

On the authority of Dr. Mason, we learn that the Bwés who have come under British rule declare that profligacy has increased amongst them owing to the English law viewing breaches of chastity more leniently than their own law did, but our experience was not long enough to enable us to form an opinion on this point.

The Italians evinced an intelligent interest in the culture of the mulberry and the breeding of silkworms as carried on by the Bwés, and hoped, in time, to induce them to adopt a better and more lucrative plan than their wasteful and slovenly system, whereby no effort is taken to keep the insects away from the influence of culinary operations, or other noxious smells, or to realise the advantages to be derived from that proper care, which the Padri, by practical experience, knew to be so essential.

The silk produced in the west of the Toungoo district is said to be superior to all other kinds in Pegu, and, from recent reports on the subject, published by Government, it would appear that the eggs of the worm bred in Karennee are highly prized.

There would, then, be less difficulty apparently in improving the breed in the Bwé region by importations from Karennee than is the case in the plains

of Pegu, where it is said the worms deteriorate to the level of the local breed in the course of two years, owing to the warmer temperature to which they are exposed.

Our commissariat not being in such a flourishing state as when we first arrived, and having long since accounted for the few goats and fowls the neighbours were able to supply, we were obliged to send for more to the Mopgha country which lies between the Kannee and Thouk-yay-gat streams, and is contiguous to the Bwé district.

Some of the Mopghas came to see us, but we should not have noticed them as strangers, as they dress like the Tunic Bwés. Here, however, the similarity ends, as their language is a dialect of *Pwo*, with some peculiarities which it is needless to detail. Mopgha is the name of one of the villages from which the missionaries have named the whole tribe. The people call themselves *Piezan*, *Piedo*, and *Plan*, the equivalent for "man" in different dialects that exist even in this small tribe, which has not more than a dozen villages belonging to it.

Most of the people have accepted Christianity, and are earnest in promoting education. The Rev. Mr. Cross, in speaking of them, says, "I know of no tribe or variety of Karens whose morality is so strict and stern as theirs."

The Burmese distinguish the Mopghas from other tribes by calling them *Tanbya* or Wild Bees, from their custom of supplying the market with honey and bees-wax.

The honey obtainable in the portion of the district, occupied by this tribe, is of considerable value,

and used, at one time, to be farmed out in accordance with the principles of taxation adopted in British Burmah, by which fisheries, edible birds' nests, honey, &c., within certain boundaries are leased annually or for a term of years. But this right was waived by Government when it was under contemplation to being down "ten thousand Karens" to form a colony in the plains, and the honey as well as the fisheries in the Mopgha circle were declared free to all.

As this project failed, the advisability of again forming the honey districts was mooted. The Mopghas, however, demurred to this, and asserted that certain families of their tribe had gained a prescriptive right to gather honey within certain limits, a privilege that had hitherto been held of great importance as the honey districts were considered in the light of real property, which the possessors had the power of selling, and were usually hereditary.

The question was accordingly held in abeyance, although it was understood that Government did not officially recognise exceptional claims of this kind.

After one of those bright shows, peculiar to this season, a very beautiful and perfect rainbow appeared in the East, enhancing the splendour of the magnificent panorama disclosed to view from the effects of the recent thunderstorm, which quenched the jungle fires and cleared the smoke-laden atmosphere. Even the phlegmatic Karens seemed, like ourselves, to appreciate the loveliness of the scene, but it was with very different emotions they looked thereon. What engendered in us feelings of unalloyed pleasure and silent admiration, struck them with superstious awe, for the rainbow is appropriately termed the "Arc of

God," *Khouz-i-Khuda* by the Mahommedan, and which the Greek, the Indian, the Icelandic, and other nations agree with us in accepting as an emblem of hope, is to them a harbinger of woe.

"In Homer the rainbow is spoken of as a prodigy, and as a sign of the divine presence and favour.

"In Indian mythology it is the sign which Indra, the Sun God, displays when he has defeated the Water Giants.

"In the Icelandic Eddas it is the bridge *Bifrost*, over which the demi-gods pass to the earth."*

Whereas with the Karens this beautiful phenomenon "is deemed to be a spirit or demon, but the people are not united in regard to its true character. Some say it is a woman who died in pregnancy, others that it is a demon which devours the spirits of human beings, and then they appear to die by accidental or violent deaths;"† on finishing its meal, they say it becomes thirsty, "therefore, when people see the rainbow they say, the rainbow has come to drink water. Look out, some one or other will die violently by an evil death;" while even children are stopped in their play so long as it lasts, lest some accident should befall them.

One of the few unpleasant recollections we have of Layto is the irritating attacks we were subject to on the part of a species of gad-fly, whose bite caused the part affected to swell, and be rather painful. They were a source of special annoyance to some of our scantily-clothed followers, one or two of whom

* Paper by Mr. Farrer, "Trans. Eth. Soc., London," vol. iii, p. 300.

† Dr. Mason, "J. A. S. B."

were nearly placed *hors de combat* from their insidious assaults.

Nearly every day batches of Red Karens, returning with salt, fish paste, cotton twist, &c., purchased with the proceeds of cattle, ponies, sticlac, and other produce of Karennee; which they had disposed of in Toungoo, came to have a look at us. Indeed, the big trees near our domicile, and skirting the high road to the Tsawkoo country and Karennee, not only afforded a grateful shade to weary travellers, but furnished seats on their gnarled trunks, from which they could at ease look on the wonderful white people.

Like the other Karens on this side of the Watershed, they generally contented themselves by staring, but without otherwise giving vent to any signs of pleasure or surprise.

On one occasion, however, a few who had never seen Europeans before proved an exception to this rule, by greeting us with loud laughter.

Our retainers, shocked by this unusual demonstrativeness, requested them, rather peremptorily, to "move on," so that we had no opportunity of ascertaining what had struck them in apparently a ridiculous light; and we thought nothing more of the matter till, on looking over some notes of Mr. O'Riley's, we find this weakness is referred to as a characteristic feature peculiar to the Red Karens, especially exhibited by the females. He says, "I note this as indicating their comparative position in the human family, that is, their abject barbarism, or advance towards civilisation; thus, I have never been seen by these people for the first time without

exciting their *intense laughter*, accompanied by an apparent fearfulness of my presence. With all other communities of Karens of the lowest grade, as with the Shans, whose curiosity to see a white man for the first time is intense, their surprise, or whatever the feeling may be which is excited by my personal appearance, is expressed by a simple exclamation, nor, unless tickled by some facetious remark of one of the party, do they give way to the boisterous laughter of the Red Karens.

"I am at a loss to account for this difference in behaviour, and therefore conclude that the impulse to laugh, combined with fear of the object, is peculiar to those races which are furthest removed from civilisation.

"Perhaps my appearance realises to their minds a '*Beloo*,' or the '*Fan-qui*' (foreign devil) of the Chinese, associated with their spirit worship; but why should they express their feelings in laughter? Now, judging of myself by our own civilisation, I may fairly state that I am not positively ugly, perhaps a redundance of beard may hide any lines of classic beauty I may possess; be that as it may, in this country I am simply the laughing-stock of the whole race of Karennees, and were I possessed of any vain opinion it would receive a rude shock from the ridicule which it apparently excites, and brings forcibly to my memory the lines of Burns:—

> 'Oh would some power the giftie gie us
> To see ourselves as ithers see us.'

The moral of which is, that no man priding himself on his personal appearance should venture into

Karennee, where his mortification would be intense."*

The ridiculous superstition that influences the wild Karens about us, trammels them as much as the decrees of caste influence the Hindus. An instance of this was afforded in the case of one of our neighbours, who absolutely refused to take some purgative medicine till he had consulted the augury of fowls' bones, putting us in mind of Mr. O'Riley's experiences when he prescribed an emetic powder for a chief's son, who was deterred from taking it by the result of the indications of the augury he had consulted, which was unfavourable.

Much as we enjoyed our jungle life, the advent of the English mail was an event looked forward to with much interest. On one occasion, policemen, who were charged with the postal budget, were a day longer than usual in accomplishing the journey, and on asking for an explanation, they informed us that the packet had only been given to them on Saturday evening, and being Christians, they could not be expected to travel on Sundays. Although one cannot help respecting men who, for conscience sake, refrain from unnecessary labour on Sunday, still it is not difficult to imagine the awkward consequences that might ensue if every policeman struck work on that day, and they were accordingly informed that such a wide discretionary power could not be given them so long as they were in Government employment.

The Italian missionaries have introduced the

* "Journ. Ind. Arch.," vol. iv, of 1857.

custom of kissing, the hand-shaking as adopted by the Americans. The former practice is, however, confined to the embryo Christians kissing the hand of their priests, and perhaps is the least objectionable, while the Baptist converts consider it a matter of duty to shake hands all round, a proceeding, we think, decidedly inconvenient.

In another chapter we have endeavoured faintly to describe the terrible hand-shaking ordeal one is expected to undergo on being introduced to the members of a Christian Karen village, and the precautions we were obliged to adopt to avoid catching that cutaneous disease which is so prevalent among the people, and which is said to be solely attributable to a deeply-rooted superstition, which causes them to think that the lavish use of water, for the purposes of ablution, is prejudicial to health.

"Surely," as Mr. O'Riley remarks,* "with the symbolical rite of their initiation into the Christian faith, as taught by the Baptists, it were equally merciful to inculcate into these poor wretches the cleansing of the body by the same element by which much of the sickness they suffer might be averted, and, if by such teaching, they could be brought to appreciate the use of soap occasionally, more valuable by far than either 'Godfrey's Cordial,' or the 'Balm of Gilead,' it would prove a real blessing."

When crossing the little "babbling brook," fed from springs on the elevations around us, we noticed that one of those miniature houses, containing the usual humble offerings, had lately been erected on

* "Journ. Ind. Arch.," vol. ii, No. 4, of 1857, note.

the margin of the stream, in honcur of the attendant water sprite or kelpie.

The people could not give us much information about this superstition, further than the bald statement that it was done for luck; but from Dr. Mason* we find that "the waters are inhabited by beings, whose proper form is that of dragons, but that occasionally appear as men, and who take wives of the children of men. Unlike the Naiads of classic antiquity, they never take the forms of females, but always appear as men." Dr. Mason has published several interesting particulars in reference to the quaint conceits among the Karens on the subject of water spirits, from which we quote the following :—

"A girl, who had been deceived, and had taken an inhabitant of the water for her husband, was told that she might ascertain his true character by watching him privately when he bathed. She did so, and saw him in the water change to a monster dragon, with a crest as large as seven wide mats. He threw up the waters to the heavens, which descended in heavy rain."

In the same paper, Dr. Mason gives a detailed account regarding *Mawlau-kwie*, a water spirit, which figures largely in Karen myths. A girl is represented as holding clandestine meetings with this personage, whom her father slew by personating his daughter.

The latter, full of devotion to her lover, consented to face numerous perils by water to get him to life again, in which she succeeded twice, to be-

* "J. A. S. B."

come a third time a widow, and by the rashness of her own father was consigned, with her child, to a watery grave, to be eventually translated to the great hall of her husband, the water-sprite.

So with the Scotch, we find, that "every lake had its 'kelpie,' or water-horse, often seen by the shepherd as he sat on a summer's evening on the brow of a rock, dashing along the surface of the deep or browsing on the pasture-ground on its verge. Often did the malignant genius of the waters allure women and children to his sub-aqueous haunts, there to be immediately devoured. Often did he also swell the torrent or lake beyond its usual limits, to overwhelm the hapless traveller in the floods."*

The "Legend of the Lady's Leap,"† one of the most charming idylls which beguile the tourist visiting the far-famed lakes of Killarney, is somewhat of the same character as the Karen conception, and is so beautiful that we cannot refrain from quoting it entire:—

"In days bygone, a lovely maiden dwelt in one of the glens of Glena. The only daughter of a king, fair and pure as a lily, and soft voiced as a dove, she was the heart's desire of the princes of Erin. But her love was not for them; her heart was given to the great O'Donoghue. On the morning of a sunny May-day she sat on the mountain side and called him to her. As she spoke, the silver shoes of his steed flashed across the lake, and brought him to her side. He dismounted, and knelt before her, and

* Graham's "Sketches of Perthshire," p. 245.

† See "Photographs of Killarney."

the strong forest trees and the tender wild flowers alike bent low in homage to their lord.

"The water-king, enraptured by her beauty, returned the love of the child of earth, and promised if she remained faithful to him for seven years, and met him alone on six May mornings at the same spot, that on the seventh he would bear her away to be queen of his palace in the lake. True to troth, on six May mornings, while the dew still sparkled on the grass, she met her royal lover, and held sweet converse with him. The seventh morning came, and the lady arrayed in a snow white robe and crowned with a wreath of lilies, repaired to the trysting-place. The bridegroom was waiting to receive her, and his horse's hoofs pawed the water in impatience. As she drew near, he stood in his stirrups, and held out his arms. Giving one last fond look back, she waved a farewell to her old home, and sprang to his embrace. Away galloped the steed across the waves, the attendants and the music following, and in a moment the new queen of the lake palace was hidden from mortal eye. The spot is still pointed out to the tourist as 'the Lady's Leap.'"*

As the office work at this time of year was comparatively slack, we found that an occasional trip to head-quarters sufficed to do what was necessary for the satisfactory travelling of the Government coach, and as we were able to prepare our annual reports with less interruption and with more satisfaction in the cooler climate of Layto, we had just made up our minds to a longer stay, when we received a tele-

* "Photographs of Killarney."

gram ordering us to take charge of another and a more important district.

We were therefore obliged to bid adieu to this interesting region sooner than we expected, with much regret, and at once returned to Toungoo, with the most pleasing reminiscences of our tour.

CHAPTER XIV.

Trip to the Gaykho Country.

From our hill head-quarters at the village of Layto we made many pleasant excursions to places in its vicinity, the most interesting of which was to that portion of the district on the Burmese frontier, inhabited by a people called by the Burmese *Kay* or *Gaykho* Karens, but they have no distinctive name for themselves beyond *Prà-kă-young*, or *Kā-young*, their name for man.

We left Layto early in the morning of the 5th April, 1869, accompanied by the Rev. Signor Tornatore, the Gaykho agent, Moung *Showay Yah*, the Karen Extra Assistant Commissioner, and others, and in less than an hour arrived at the beautiful little valley of *Leppet-eng*, or "Tea-lake," which derives its name from a number of tea trees that grow round a little pond situated therein. Major Lloyd, hoping that he had found the true tea of commerce, some years ago collected some of the leaves, and submitted them for professional opinion, when they were pronounced to be *Eurya*, or wild tea, which is common in many other parts of the district, especially near *Nattoung*.

After leaving *Leppet-eng*, the gradients are so easy, and the road itself so good, that with very little trouble it might be made practicable for car-

riages as far as the ridge on the south of the *Nankyo* valley, the descent to which is very steep.

Passing through the stubbles in the valley, we flushed a beautiful silver pheasant (*Phasianus fasciatus*); and as the Karens said these birds are plentiful, we immediately seized our gun, but, finding no more, we were fain to shoot some green pigeons (*Treron cicincta*), which were in great numbers on the banyan trees (*Ficus religiosa*), the berries of which they are very fond of.

The Karens made arrangements for breakfast at a village picturesquely situated near the margin of the stream inhabited by a tribe called *Toungthu* by the Burmese, which means either mountaineer or southerner, but who designate themselves as *Pa-au*.

This industrious and interesting, but comparatively little known people, are found scattered in small communities in Burmah proper, the Shan States, the Cambodia, as well as in British Burmah. In dress they are not unlike the *Khyens*, another isolated tribe found here and there in Burmah, but oftener in Arracan.

The *Toungthus* wear dark blue or black garments, the women having the usual frock worn by the Karens, supplemented by a head dress of the same material and colour, with a border of deep red, which has a good effect.

Like the Karens, they have traditions of having come from the north; and we find from Dr. Mason that they represent themselves as formerly having had a king of their own, the seat of whose Government was at *Thatung* (Thatone).* We should be

* Mason's "Burmah," p. 94.

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THE CHIEF'S WIDOW WELCOMING US TO GAYKHO-LAND.

inclined to class the *Toungthus* in the Karen family from their relation to the *Pwo* Karens by affinities of language, and from their possessing characteristics in common with some of the mountain Karen tribes.

Mr. Logan is further of opinion that Toungthu, in its vocabulary and phonology, is merely a dialect of Karen, though, like Karen, it has acquired some Mōn words. It probably, he says, preceded the Sgan and Pwo, or has remained more secluded.*

Dr. Mason, whose experience has been more varied, declares, "there is nothing to associate this tribe with the Karens but their language." Captain Foley, quoted by Dr. Mason, says, "both men and women closely resemble the picture of the *Huns*, drawn by Gibbon in his immortal history," and further on he adds, "I am persuaded that these people are descendants of the *Tanjau*, described by Gibbon, a *remnant of the ancient Huns!* preserved during the lapse of 1788 years uncomminuted with the blood of strangers."†

Although unable to subscribe to the rather startling theory advanced by Captain Foley as to their origin, we are unable at the same time to gainsay it, and must be content to abide the results of further inquiry, in order to pronounce definitely on many points connected with this singular people.

The day we arrived seemed quite a red-letter day with the villagers who had donned their best and gayest apparel, not in our honour as we at first imagined, but on the occasion of a marriage which had just been celebrated. We were unable to be

* "Journ. Ind. Arch.," No. 4, 1857.

† Ibid.

present at the ceremony; an eye-witness, however, gave us the following interesting details, which show that in one of their most important social customs the *Toungthus* differ from the Karens as well as the Burmese.

After all the friends of both parties assembled, related our informant, the bridegroom who was seated opposite his bride took a cotton thread*, and, binding it several times round the wrist of the latter, repeated the following formula. "This is my wife; may she enjoy long life and escape the ninety-six diseases.† May our union be blessed, and may she be fortunate in everything she undertakes."

The bride then bound the bridegroom's wrist in the same manner repeating the same formula. Each, then, fed the other with rice which seems equivalent to signing the parish register in more civilised communities.

On leaving the *Toungthu* village, a road ran along the *Nankyo* valley, crossing the stream several times, then came a steep ascent which took half an hour to surmount, after which, by fairly easy inclines

* Captain Lewin, speaking of marriage ceremonies among the *Kyoung Thas*, one of the wild tribes near Chittagong, says: "On the floor of the house are placed water in jars, rice, and mango leaves. Round these a new spun cotton thread is wound and carried again round the two contracting parties, as they stand opposite to each other."—"Wild Tribes of South Eastern India," p. 129.

The coincidence of using a cotton thread is singular, but we failed to ascertain its significance.

† Our narrator evidently here made use of the Burmese idiom expressive of "all the ills that flesh is heir to," instead of the Toungthu equivalent.

we reached the village of *Ngamoung*, called after its chief, the most influential personage among the northern Bwé Karens.

The *Nankyo* is similar to the *Thouk-yay-gat*, and other bright clear streams that add such a charm to the hills in the eastern portion of the district, and many parts of its valley, clothed with rich vegetation of the same character as that met with in similar localities elsewhere described, yields not in picturesque beauty to the more southern portion of the district noticed in our tour to *Nattoung*. It was here we came upon dense thickets of wild raspberry bushes covered with yellow fruit, not quite so luscious perhaps as its European congener, yet sufficiently palatable to revive old recollections, and to be fully appreciated by the ladies, for whom we gathered a large basket full.

It is also remarkable for a very beautiful waterfall, which Dr. Mason has called the "McMahon Cascade," in compliment to the first English lady who visited these remote regions. It is well worth visiting, and, although so near, the road to it might easily be missed were it not that the noise of the fall naturally attracts one to a charming little dell, through which the stream trends its turbulent passage, and, forcing itself between battlemented rocks (covered to the water's edge with a wealth and variety of verdure which owe their luxuriance to the nourishment afforded by constant moisture), falls sheer some forty feet into a deep limpid basin, which, surrounded on all sides by walls of stone or massive boulders, to which ferns, orchids, and parasites of various kinds cling in fantastic profusion, seemed

worthy to be the abode of a genial *nat* or sprite, and may well be called the "Fairy's Grotto."

Like its grander prototype O'Sullivan's Cascade, in Killarney, it may be said—

"The ungovernable torrent, loud and strong,
In thunder roaring as it dashed along,
Leaping with speed infuriate wildly down,
Where rocks grotesque in massive grandeur frown.
With ocean strength it rushes on its way,
'Mid hoary clouds of everlasting spray
To its rock basin with tremendous roar,
The brown hills trembling on the wizard shore."*

The village of *Ngamoung* is comparatively a well-to-do place, as the houses are substantially built on stout posts, and the people who are Christians seemed to pay more attention to appearances as well as comfort, than is the case with other Bwé Karens.

The view on leaving the village next morning was superb, and, indeed, the whole of our journey was most interesting from the charming views which opened out on every side as we progressed northwards.

Arriving on the border of the Gaykho country, a deputation from the village of *Ningian* met us; and, firing off pistols as a mark of respect, as well as to intimate to their fellows that we were coming, assured us of their delight at seeing us.

Farther on stood the widow and representative of of *Ningian*, the late chief, with a number of her maidens dressed in all their finery, who, standing on a rock in a stream which flows by the village, shook hands with us, and, cordially bidding us welcome to

* "Photographs of Killarney."

her country, immediately busied herself in giving orders in regard to the dispósal of our camp, and for the necessary supplies.

Although the Salic law, we were informed, is generally adopted among the *Gaykhos*, no one of sufficient importance had as yet come forward to take up the mantle of the late *Ningian*, a man of extraordinary energy and influence; his *chief* widow, therefore (for he has two if not more), had consequently assumed the reins of power during the interregnum in favour of her son, a minor, and acquitted herself apparently with eminent tact and vigour.

She has certainly established for herself a reputation for cleverness, in retaining her late husband's influence with a large portion of the tribe in her own favour, as well as managing her domestic concerns with care and prudence; facts that very probably accounted for the marked attention paid to the buxom widow by the Gaykho agent, who has the manifest advantage over her other *foreign* admirers, of being able to converse with her in her mother-tongue instead of through the medium of Burmese or other dialects of Karen, with which she is imperfectly acquainted.

Although suffering from an attack of fever she paid us a visit in the evening to see that all her orders for our comfort and convenience had been carried out, and begged our acceptance of a spear, baskets, and wearing apparel, as specimens of Gaykho workmanship, to which we made suitable acknowledgment in the shape of a gift of silk handkerchiefs, looking-glasses, &c. She also showed herself considerably in advance of her people by eagerly accept-

ing our offer to treat her for fever, instead of deprecating by sacrifice the wrath of the malignant demons whom, they (in common with other savage Karens) believe, are the cause of all their diseases. With such a faith it is hardly necessary to add there is no opening in this country for medical practitioners, and the only use we have ever heard of medicine of any kind being put to among the tribes in this region is in the case of *Hashwié Karens* whom Dr. Mason has heard use *Perry Davis's "Pain Killer"* as an ingredient in their manufacture of gunpowder!

To the credit of Western science it is satisfactory to record that our diagnosis of the widow's complaint having been made on correct premises, we were fortunate in effecting a perfect cure, not without a suspicion on the part of her conservative advisers that "the bitter white medicine" (quinine) we administered was simply a charm or antidote against the effects of demoniacal influence.

Leaving *Ningian* early next morning we arrived in time for breakfast at a village called *Ngakyaw*, which has been selected for our camp, as the village in which *Bogyee*, the principal chief of the country resides, is not so accessible.

The old chief apologised for not being present to welcome us in person as he had to superintend the burning of a clearing, which, being in the vicinity of his village, required extraordinary care, but arrived in camp just after we had retired to rest. Having been thoroughly roused by the noise made by the advent of the chief and his party, we had an interview with the former, in which we, by mutual consent, confined ourselves simply to ordinary topics,

leaving the great question of opening out the trade route to the Shan States, to be discussed on the following day.

The chief has none of the physical characteristics of his tribe, or indeed any of the races of Mongol origin, for were it not for his copper colour, he has the appearance of a bluff old English farmer, and his face, in spite of the ravages that a too ardent devotion to spirits has made upon it, is still a fine one, exhibiting signs of intellectual power although sadly wasted, and reminded us much of the portraits of some of the old Roman emperors.

We found *Bogyee* an intelligent old man; and, having won his heart by a glass of Exshaw's best brandy, obtained from him a considerable amount of information without the necessity of his employing an interpreter owing to his being able to speak Burmese with considerable fluency. A second glass of brandy was discussed by the chief on his departure, and agreeably to his request we promised him a "full bottle properly corked and sealed" so soon as our conference to be held that day was over.

The Gaykhos were ever conspicuous for their inveterate hostility to the Burmese, who invariably extended towards them as well as to other Karens that harsh and inconsiderate policy with which it is to the present day their wont to awe the *Kakhyens* near Bhamò, a people who have many of the characteristics of the hill Karens, and who, like them, have an implacable hatred to the Burmese Government.

When the English obtained possession of the country they found themselves burdened with a disagreeable legacy, for the Gaykhos as a matter of

course transferred their feelings of ill-will to the new rulers. Owing, however, to the conciliatory measures adopted by the officer in civil charge of the district, and to the successful results of Christian teaching, this feeling of distrust and hatred has been happily eradicated, and it may be said that the people of some of their villages so appreciate the benevolence shown by the inhabitants of Toungoo as well as by the English Government on the occasion of a famine which threatened them in 1867, that they may now be reckoned as our firm friends.

These people, less provident than their neighbours, had no stores of corn, and depended for their chief sustenance on the rice crops, which were utterly destroyed by a vast number of rats, which, attracted by the flowering or seeding of the bamboos, had assembled in great numbers, and after devouring the bamboo seeds, made an incursion into the fields, and ate up the rice also.

These armies of rats, consisting of many thousands, occasionally make similar visitations on the plains of Pegu, and although their advent is the signal for all the villagers to turn out with sticks and staves to deal destruction as much as they can, the rats are sometimes so numerous as to defy these exertions towards their extermination, and the vast assemblage pours on, after greatly damaging the crops, to commit fresh havoc elsewhere.

The shortest route to *Mobyè*, *Monè*, and the Central Shan States from Toungoo, passes through the *Gaykho* country, and consequently the advisability of making this route practicable for Shan traders was apparent to Major Lloyd when in charge of the

district, who, after encountering some diplomatic difficulties owing to the savage nature of the people, succeeded, with the assistance of the Rev. Mr. Bixby, and *Moung Showay Yah* (an influential Bwé chief, who has since been appointed Gaykho agent), in making arrangements with *Bogyee* and *Ningian*, two of the principal chiefs, by which it was agreed that the latter should be allowed to collect a tax on cattle and laden porters that passed through their country, on condition that they opened out the route, and kept it open as well as safe for travellers.

The Burmese authorities trans-frontier at once saw that their profits, legitimate and otherwise, would sensibly diminish if the slave-traders were diverted to this new road from the more circuitous one in Burmese territory, and consequently did their utmost to nullify the arrangement made with the Gaykhos by enforcing prohibitory imposts on traders who entered British territory in that direction.

These measures in part succeeded, but, owing to the inordinate rapacity of the Burmese officials along the old road, and the obstructions placed by them in the way of importing cattle into British Burmah, the Shans again began to turn their attention to the new one, and it was therefore our obvious policy to assist them as much as possible, and thereby develop our trade with the Shan States.

We therefore made a point of going over the Gaykho route, with a view to ascertaining whether the promises made to Major Lloyd were kept, and regretted to find that the road was far from being in the condition it should be, for owing to the passive indifference of the chiefs, rather than to any active

opposition on the part of the people, the impediments in the Gaykho country were such as to deter traders from taking full advantage of this natural route for traffic.

The subject was discussed at length with *Bogyee*, and all the other principal chiefs of the country, and we took care to lay before them clearly the whole of the facts of the case, pointing out particularly that the obstructive policy of the Burmese in regard to trade was their opportunity, and that they owed it to themselves and their people to afford every encouragement to the Shan traders to take advantage of the road, by making it more practicable than it was then for beasts of burthen, and taking care that travellers were not murdered, robbed, or molested in any other way.

Bogyee and the others seemed to take an intelligent interest in what we said, and confessed that the manifest advantages that would accrue to them from a proper conservancy of the route through their country, had not been brought home to them so clearly before, and pledged themselves to endeavour to carry out our wishes. It was finally arranged that *Bogyee* should be the responsible chief for superintending the necessary arrangements connected with the road, and that the agent, *Moung Showay Yah*, should reside in his village during the months the road is open for traffic, and assist *Bogyee* in rateably sharing the proceeds of the toll he is allowed to collect from cattle and laden porters, in giving advice and assistance with a view to keeping the other chiefs in order, and in furthering the objects for which this road has been opened.

The arrangements for improving the traffic with the Shan States, though crude, were the best that could be made at the time. The civilising influences that were brought to bear on the *Gaykhos* produced good fruit, in changing them from determined foes to friends; still many of their savage instincts remain, and it requires some tact to manage them.

Our visit was, we trust, productive of good, as the people seemed heartily glad to see us; and no doubt, after they have had more intercourse with our officers, this friendly feeling will increase.

Never acknowledging, nay, defying the authority of the Burmese, it is satisfactory to record that the Gaykhos were anxious to evince their loyalty to the English by voluntarily offering to pay taxes, but it was considered inexpedient to comply with their request.

General Description of the Country.—The territory inhabited by the Gaykho Karens is divided from the Sittang river by the district occupied by the *Shoungs,* and is located on both sides of the boundary line between British and Burmese territory.

The *Hashwié* country lies on its east, and that of the Bwés forms its southern boundary. The Rev. Mr. Bixby, who had travelled all over the country, was under the impression that it lies lower than the portion of the district contiguous to the Sittang, and that it has a general slope in a northern direction, towards which its streams flow. The general appearance of the country gives the idea that it was at one time more thickly populated than it is now, as it contains comparatively little timber trees, and there are signs of its having been more extensively cultivated than it is at present.

Products and Manufactures.—Among its products may be mentioned silk, cotton, tobacco, rice, and all the vegetables common to Burmah, the mulberry being extensively cultivated.

The Gaykhos, as well as many of the adjoining tribes, make gunpowder.

Rude blacksmith's work is found among them, but they are dependent on the Shans for guns and other weapons, as they are at present ignorant of most of the useful arts.

Physical Characteristics.—The Gaykhos claim to be superior to all the other Karen tribes; not without some reasonable grounds, for the men are stout, tall, and muscular; daring in adventure, and warlike in disposition; while the women are fair, well developed, and occasionally good-looking.

Many of the people are as fair as the Chinese, and among the young people are sometimes found individuals with red and white, in strong contrast in their faces, but never with that clearness of complexion that Europeans possess.

In general appearance they resemble the Bwés more than any other tribe of Karens.

Dress.—The men wear short drawers with red embroidery, similar to those worn by the Bwés. The women wear the ordinary petticoat, supplemented by a red and white jacket, and load their legs and arms with heavy brass coils, and their necks with similar coils of lead.

Language.—According to Dr. Mason,* a considerable number of the vocables of the Gaykho language are allied to the Red Karen, although the people

* Mason's "Burmah," p. 92.

themselves regard it as related to the *Shoung*, whose numerals, as well as some other words, are identical; but Dr. Mason says, that the *Shoung* dialect proves the people to be of *Pwo* origin, so that if most of the affinities of the *Gaykho* language agree with the Red Karens, it may reasonably be placed in the *Bwé* family.

Social Customs.

Births.—The ceremonies connected with the births, as well as the naming of children, are nearly the same as those observed by the Bwés. The father for the nonce undertakes the mother's duties, in drawing water from the spring, boiling it for the use of the lying-in chamber, with wood of his own cutting, and performing other household work, the peculiar province of women under ordinary circumstances.

Consulting the oracle of the fowls' bones, with its invariable accompaniment of feasting and drinking are, it is hardly necessary to add, prominent features in these ceremonies.

Betrothals.—Like the Bwés, they are accustomed to betroth their children when they are mere infants, but the children often resent these arrangements as inconsistent with the right of selection, which they naturally arrogate to themselves, and when they arrive at years of discretion form unions for themselves, based on mutual love or liking, instead of allowing others to choose for them.

When a young man is determined to act in defiance of the agreement entered into by his parents, he does not, as a rule, court his sweetheart

openly, but visits her, as our informant related, like a "thief in the night."

If the maiden accepts her lover's addresses, she admits him into her chamber by stealth, and when the other members of the family have retired to rest, they hold sweet converse till the early dawn, discussing the prospects of their reciprocity treaty.

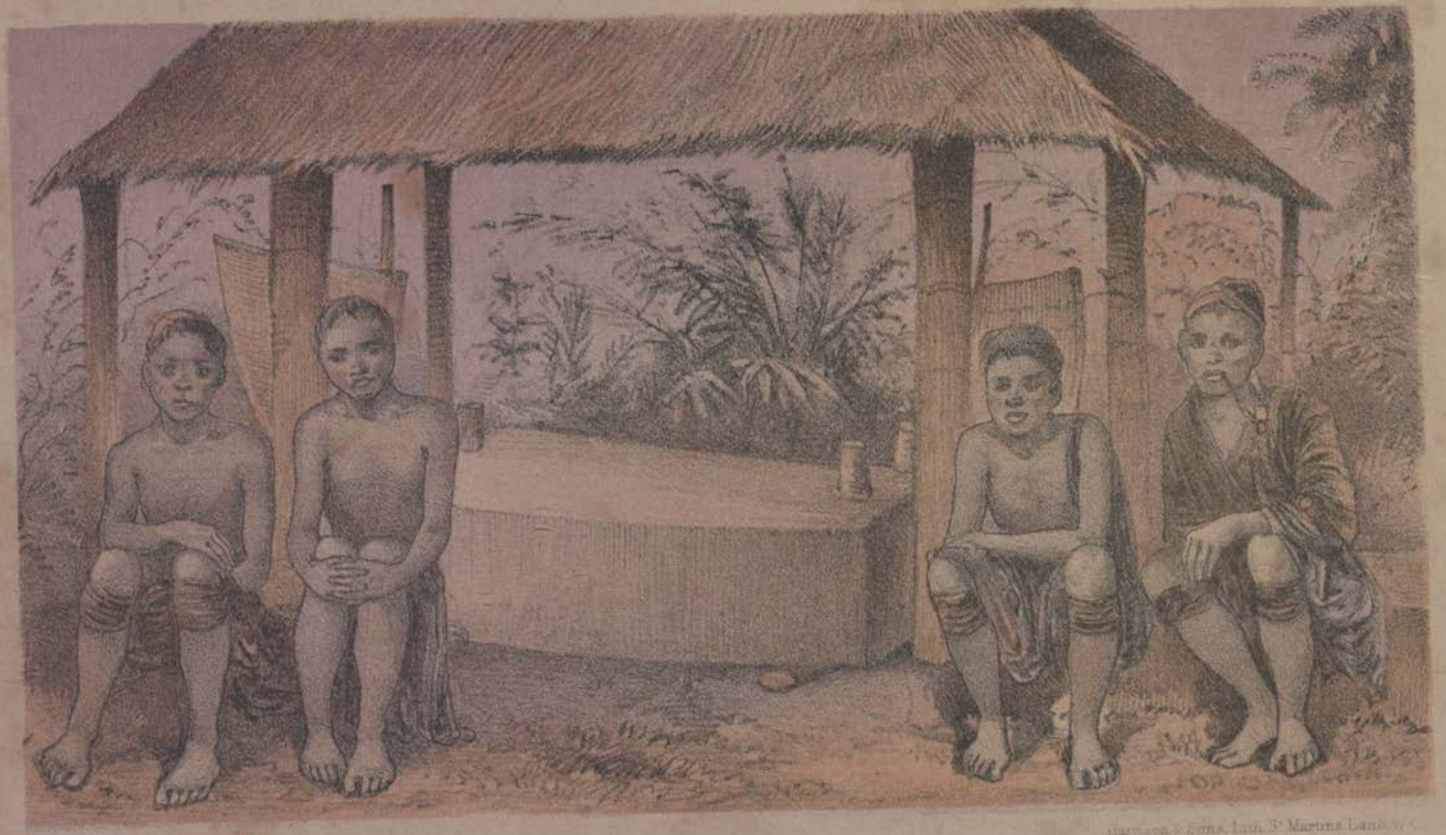
This custom, however, is not confined to the *Gaykhos*, for it is identical with what obtains among the Burmese, and it is not an unusual thing when the police take up young fellows at unreasonable hours of the night for them to confess they have been on a courting expedition, a sufficiently tangible excuse for a Burmese constable, if other suspicious circumstances do not belie the assertion.

We need not indeed look so far as Burmah for a parallel, for human nature is the same everywhere, and if we are not mistaken, the farm and domestic servants in some parts of Scotland conduct their love affairs much in the same way as the *Gaykhos* do, and in this particular we have an instance of sympathy between Celt and Mongol if in no other.

If the match should be broken off by mutual consent or otherwise, the matrimonial prospects of the Gaykho spinster are not lessened, for at the worst, her lover has to pay heavy damages, which serve to enhance her value in the matrimonial market.

Marriage.— The actual marriage ceremony appears to be celebrated in the same fashion as in the Bwé country, a description of which we have given in another chapter.

Death.—Their funeral ceremonies are also identical with those observed by the *Bwés*, but in the funeral



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GAYKHOS WITH CHIEFS COFFIN

of the chiefs or other men of importance the coffin is a much more important element in the affair, for, owing to the scarcity of heavy timber trees (already noticed) there is occasionally some difficulty in finding a fitting receptacle for the corpse, as in such a case it is customary to hew the coffin from an immense log, and it not unfrequently happens that it is prepared long before the death of the intended recipient, owing to the time and trouble it entails.

On our way to our rendezvous with the Gaykho Chiefs we saw one of these coffins in a hut erected close to the pathway, and if we recollect rightly, it was intended for old *Bogyee* after he departs this life. It was about six or seven feet long by three feet deep, with wings like the prow of a boat at each end, and with four short legs at the corners, intended to keep it off the ground when used, but in the meantime the coffin had been placed upside down to keep it clean. It was scooped out so as to allow a corpse of ordinary dimensions to lie prone at bottom, but so narrow was the opening at top that the most attenuated body could scarcely be squeezed through it without much pressure, much less one of the obesity which is a characteristic feature in the old chief, involuntarily reminding us of the scene so graphically described by Bishop Bigandet on the occasion of the corpse of a Buddhist monk or Talapoin, which he saw being put into a coffin of scanty dimensions, and vividly picturing to our imagination the hideous results likely to occur if force were employed in consigning the mortal remains of a Gaykho Chief to its last resting place.

Dr. Bigandet says:—"A Talapoin of my ac-

quaintance had died a fortnight before, after thirty years of profession. His body laid in the coffin was to be for ever concealed from human sight. . . . Two stout carpenters appeared bringing a board four or five inches thick, designed for the cover. They vainly tried to fit it in its place; the hollow of the coffin was neither broad nor deep enough for holding the corpse, although reduced to the smallest proportions. The operation was not a very easy one to bring the board in contact with the sides of the coffin, despite the resistance that was to be offered by the corpse. The carpenters were determined not to be disappointed. At the two ends and in the middle of the coffin, ropes were passed several times round it with the utmost tension, in such a manner as to have six or seven coils in the same place. Enormous wooden wedges were inserted right and left in three places between the sides and the coils. On these wedges the workmen hammered with their whole strength during about twenty minutes, to the great amusement of all the bystanders. Each blow of the hammer lessened the distance between the cover and the brim of the coffin. Every perceptible success gained over the latent resisting power elicited a burst of applause, and a cheer to the persevering workmen. At last, all resistance being overcome, the cover rested fixedly in its place. It is needless to add that the corpse inside was but a hideous mass of mangled flesh and broken bones."*

Dr. Mason writes:—"When a chief or any other slaveholder dies, one of his slaves is said to be

* Life or legend of "Gaudama." By the Right Rev. P. Bigandet. P. 328. Note to second edition.

buried alive with the corpse, to wait upon him in the next world, a custom that formerly existed in China. A cylindrical hole is dug deep, into which the slave with some provisions is put; over him, the pit being widened for the purpose, the corpse is laid, and the grave is then filled up with earth."* But the bare notion of such a practice, which possibly may have existed in times long gone by, is now scouted by the people as false, although occasionally, it is said, a slave is bound near the grave of a chief (as is sometimes the custom with the Red Karens), to obtain his final release from bondage on his freeing himself.

Government.—Owing to their prominent energy of character, *Bogyee* and *Ningian* were held to be chiefs of the Northern and Southern Gaykhos respectively, and since the death of the latter, *Bogyee* would fain be ruler of the whole country, were it not for the persistent obstinacy of *Ningian's* widow, who seems determined to keep her late husband's power in her own hands, till her son is old enough to take his father's place.

The power of either, excepting over their immediate followers, in their capacity of Patriarch, was however merely nominal; the lesser chiefs, as is the case with other tribes, acting independently of them and of each other.

Religion.—In common with even the most savage of the Karen tribes, the Gaykhos acknowledge the existence of a Supreme Being, the Creator of heaven and earth, and Ruler of the universe, who in ancient times looked with favour upon the Karens, but who

* Mason's "Burmah," p. 93.

has turned away his face from them on account of their grievous sins, leaving them to the mercy of demons and other inferior spiritual agents, who are only to be approached by deprecatory offerings of the blood of fowls or animals.

But unlike many others who believe in a future, although they do not hold that their actions in this life influence that future, the Gaykhos acknowledge that they will be punished or rewarded hereafter according to their acts on earth. The wicked, they say, are sent to a place of torment, while the just will be received into an abode of bliss, to which is added the comforting hope, held by many Christians, that the spirits of beloved ones who have gone before, will be ready to welcome them at the threshold, and remain with them joyfully evermore, instead of being subject to the sorrowful partings that take place in this transitory world.

They have also traditions regarding the Creation as well as the Deluge, somewhat similar to those pertaining to the *Sgans* and others, noticed elsewhere; absurd and confused, it is true, but important in so far as they bear out the idea that the Karens are indebted to the Jews or the Nestorians for traditions which accord so well with events recorded in the Old Testament.

The seeds of a purer faith have already begun to germinate in this barren soil, and it is trusted that the blessings of Christianity, which have done so much in ameliorating the spiritual condition of more barbarous peoples, may be extended to the *Gaykhos*.*

* Some of the people located in the southern portion of the Gaykho country have shown a decided interest in the teachings

History or Tradition.

History.—Like many of the other tribes, they have traditions of having, in ancient times, "come from the North," and also having enjoyed great consequence and power at *Thatone*, near Moulinlin, which is so famous in the annals of the Bhuddist religion. But these traditions are so vague that it is impossible to form a conjecture as to the period of their location at Thatone, much less of their exodus from the North.

On the authority of Chief Bogyee, it would appear that some fourteen generations ago the Gaykhos occupied that portion of the country now known as the Western Shan States, and were ruled over by a chief called *Klieperee.*

Klieperee had a daughter famed in all the regions round for her great beauty, who had numerous suitors for her hand; of these, the most celebrated was a handsome young Shan Saubwa, or chief, named *Gwaynee*, ruler of the country now occupied by the *Gaykhos*, who was not only distinguished for his gallantry and chivalric bearing, but also for the wisdom and tact with which he administered the affairs of his people. He was so fortunate as to

of Christianity, encouraging schools and teachers, and endeavouring to lead a new life. We have now in our possession, as noted in our tour among the Gaykhos, a spear, prized by one of their chiefs as a weapon with which he had slain many men, but which, on becoming a reformed character, he gave to the missionary who induced him to abandon his lawless life. We also have a sword tendered by another *Gaykho*, as a subscription for missionary purposes, in lieu of silver and gold, of which he had none. It was the only valuable thing he possessed, and in giving it up practically demonstrated the reality of his convictions.

secure the affection of *Klieperee's* daughter, but the old chief, who had ulterior views as to the disposal of her hand to one of his own kith and kin, and was horrified at the idea of her marrying anyone but a Karen, resolutely forbade the bands.

The gallant *Gwaynee,* nothing daunted, eloped with his fair inamorata, and refusing to comply with the demands made by *Klieperee* as compensation for this outrage, was obliged to defend himself from the Gaykhos, who immediately declared war against his country. If Gaykho history is to be credited, the Shans were driven out, and the Gaykhos occupied *Gwaynee's* territory, which they still retain, but it is far more probable that the Gaykhos, like other Karen tribes, have gradually been driven from the North by more warlike peoples, and have long remained unmolested in a region eminently suited to their requirements, but which offers little inducement to the cupidity of a foreign people.

Living here for many generations in a state of chronic warfare with the neighbouring tribes and with each other, and having a character for ferocity only equalled perhaps by the Red Karens, the Gaykhos enjoyed an unenviable notoriety for their lawlessness, as well as their independence of control on the part of the Burmese Government, but under the milder as well as the firmer rule of the British, there is every reason to believe that a great change has taken place in the feelings of the people, and that by degrees, as they become accustomed to the advantages of an organized system of Government, they will be good and loyal subjects.

Padoung Karens.—Within view, and easy distance to the east of our Gaykho camp lay the territories belonging to the *Padoungs*, *Hashwiés*, and *Prays*, which we were most anxious to visit, but owing to pressure of time were unable to do so.

Numerous representatives of these tribes, however, came to visit us.

The *Padoungs* and *Hashwiés* resemble the Gaykhos somewhat in physical characteristics, dress,* and many of their customs and habits, while the *Prays* are more like the *Tsawkoos*. We will therefore content ourselves with a few general remarks regarding them.

The Padoungs, located on the extreme north-eastern corner of British possessions, extend to the north into Burmah proper, as well as beyond the Great Watershed to the east.

Their country, with its bold limestone peaks, covered with white lichens, towering over the dark and heavily-wooded valleys below, is in striking contrast with the richly cultivated table land of Karennee to the east, as well as to the comparatively low hills and undulating lands of the Gaykhos on the west. Unlike them, too, its soil is hard and unproductive, and the people often find it hard to live when, as occasionally happens, they have bad harvests.

Bordering on to the Shan States, the people speak Shan as well as their own dialect, and occa-

* One of the Padoung girls who came to our camp had her hair dressed *à la chignon* on the top of her head, with pins stuck through it. This fashion we have not noticed elsewhere among the Karens.

sionally adopt Shan proclivities, so much as to be called by some people Shan Karens. They live in large villages similar to those in Karennee, each presided over by a chief or patriarch, all of whom are independent of each other.

Unaccountably, they have the reputation of being peaceful and honest people, although they are notorious for the bitterness of their feuds, as well as for the effrontery with which they make raids on their weaker neighbours, and sell their captives into slavery.

Christianity, when we were in the country, had made little or no progress among them or the other tribes on the Watershed immediately south of them.

Hashwié Karens.—Hashwié, as they are called by the Bwé Karens, and *Hashu* as they designate themselves, is the name of a small tribe located immediately south of the *Padoungs*. Their territory presents the same physical aspect as the Padoung country, and is remarkable for numerous saltpetre caves, which will be noticed hereafter.

The men are tall, slender, active, and warlike. The women are not so good-looking as the Gaykhos, and carry out the absurd fashion of wearing leaden coils round the neck, and brass coils round the legs and arms to a more extravagant degree than the women of other tribes.

To obtain a Hashwié damsel in marriage, it is necessary for the intending Benedict to purchase her with a *kyee-zee* or drum; and before the nuptial knot is tied, this must be begged, borrowed, or stolen, if not already in the possession of the enamoured swain.

On the principle that all is fair in love, the Hashwié youth, however punctilious he may be as regards the laws of "*meum* and *tuum*" on ordinary occasions, has no compunction in stealing a *kyee-zee*, if the want of one is the only obstacle towards the fulfilment of his hopes, and thus probably creates a *casus belli*, not to be amicably settled for generations.

Slavery is a recognized institution with the Hashwiés, as it is with their neighbours, but to a casual observer the social condition of the slaves differs little from that of their masters.

Pray or Say-may Karens.—Immediately south of the Hashwiés is a small tribe called *Pray* by the Red Karens, and *Say-mays*, or blacknecks by the Burmese, on account of the black coils they wear round the throat.

They appear to be a sub-tribe of the Bwé family, and (on the authority of Dr. Mason) are acknowledged as such by the Red Karens and other Bwés.

They are described by Mr. Bixby as lean and cadaverous looking, with little clothing, existing chiefly by plunder; savage, treacherous, ignorant of all the useful arts, and, in short, regular Caterans. Ishmael among the other tribes, their hand appears to be against every one, and every one's hand against them.

It is hoped, however, in time, that civilisation and religious enlightenment may have the same happy results with these poor savage people, as it has had with tribes equally barbarous.

Saltpetre.—The manufacture of saltpetre, as

carried on by these wild tribes, deserves special notice.

The products of their limestone caves proves that the crude article is not saltpetre proper, nitrate of potash, but nitrate of lime; for saltpetre, as it is found in such deposits, is always more or less contaminated with the nitrates of lime, magnesia, and soda, besides the corresponding chlorides and sulphates.

The Karens dig out of these caverns earth highly charged with nitric acid, produced, in their opinion, from the excrement of bats, hence their name for saltpetre is *blaé*, "bat dung," which no doubt contributes to furnish nitre, as would be the case in all situations where animal matters are completely decomposed with access of air and of proper substances with which they can readily combine. This earth they place on a raised platform made for the purpose, and deluge it with a strong lye or water impregnated with alkaline salt from straw ashes. The water takes up the salt, filters through the earth to a receptacle below, and is then removed to huge iron cauldrons or earthen pots, and boiled down. The water dissolves the nitrate of lime, the lye furnishes carbonate of potassa, and thus a soluble nitrate of potassa is formed, and an insoluble carbonate of lime. Hence, when boiled down, the lime is dropped, and crystals of nitrate of potash are formed.

The Gaykho agent believes there are about thirty caves in the territory occupied by the *Hashwié* and *Padoung* tribes, which, roughly calculating, yield about five thousand pounds annually.

The manufacture is carried on only once a year,

and apparently exhausts the produce for that year. The only use the Karens make of saltpetre is as an ingredient for gunpowder.

The caves are said to be no great distance from the high road from the Shan States to Toungoo, and in this case the difficulties to be contended with in conveying the saltpetre to the Toungoo market are by no means impracticable.

Gunpowder.—Most of these tribes, as well as those beyond our borders, manufacture a coarse kind of gunpowder. Its composition does not differ essentially from that of other countries, as it is an intimate mixture of saltpetre, sulphur and charcoal, but the proportions in which these ingredients are mixed have not been ascertained.

The people obtain the saltpetre from their own caves, the sulphur from the Shans or from Toungoo, and make their own charcoal.

It is a remarkable fact that these wild and uncultivated people who are completely ignorant of many of the arts that are common among civilised communities should retain their knowledge of the manufacture of gunpowder. We say retain advisedly, as in all probability they acquired it from the Chinese, who are said to have possessed the art many centuries before it was known in Europe. Dr. Mason states that the juice of the lime, orange, and some other fruits is used in its composition, and also notices that the people have an idea that certain alcoholic mixtures add to its power, and that "Perry Davis's Pain Killer" has a reputation with the powder-makers !*

* Mason's "Burmah," p. 523.

Karen Dinner Party.—An old chief whose unkempt hair was partially tied up with an old and tattered piece of muslin, mud-coloured from use, with breeches originally striped in the fashion affected by his tribe, but of the same sad hue, with no other raiment, but with the indispensable bag which all the Karens sling from the shoulder, well filled with odds and ends, consisting, among other provender, of a fat snake, whose tail hung out at one corner (for all is fish that comes into a Karen's net), tall and weird-looking; was a conspicuous figure in the crowd of strange-looking beings around us.

This old fellow whose name had long been a household word for the truculent ferocity with which he conducted forays, had, it was said, entirely repented of his former habits; and, in token of his desire to lead a peaceful life, had given up his spear to the Rev. Mr. Bixby. He had slain some thirty men with this weapon, and valued it, till he adopted peace proclivities as his most trusted friend.

We have retained it as a curiosity. Some old men who accompanied him said they had been at a dinner party we had given to the hill Karens some eighteen months before, and asked us if we were going to give another.

The entertainment to which they referred had impressed the poor fellows very much, and was evidently reckoned as a red-letter day in their mental almanacks, as it certainly is in our note-book.

The party, as originally conceived, was a much more modest affair than it subsequently developed into.

Soon after our arrival in Toungoo we had a visit

from Mrs. Mason's school girls, a troop of merry bright-eyed and laughter-loving maidens, who, with their clean frocks and bright head-dresses, afforded a great contrast to their careworn and dirt-begrimed sisters in the jungle villages, who seldom laugh, and hardly know what it is to play. Being very busy at the time, we had to dismiss them somewhat unceremoniously, but lest the little girls should be hurt at our neglect, we asked them to repeat their visit at a more convenient time, when we promised them tea and cakes. By some misunderstanding, the invitation which was intended to include only our little visitors, who were perhaps thirty in number, was accepted in the names of some forty chiefs, who, with their followers, were expected to number four hundred souls. It was too late, we found, to rectify the mistake, as the invitation, it was said, was "flying all over the hills," so we were fain to accept the increased responsibility thus thrown upon us as we best could. Accordingly, three huge pigs were slaughtered, roasted, and cut up; large iron cauldrons full of tea were prepared; requisitions on the Chinese bakers for a proportionate excess of the abnormal demand for bread and cakes were duly made; large supplies of plantains and other fruits with rice and the usual condiments and garnishing the Burmese are so fond of, were also laid in; in short, a sumptuous repast was ready on the day appointed. Amusements, too, were not wanting. Merry-go-rounds, in which venerable chiefs took their turn with solemn visages which seemed to betoken that they were martyrs to a stern sense of duty, were a prominent feature in the outdoor programme, which also included races

and other juvenile games; while an English piano and a magic lantern fully engaged attention when the darkness brought the former diversions to a close.

The proceedings commenced with a formal address from the assembled chiefs, neatly translated into Burmese by one of their number, to which we made a suitable reply, and, after some conversation with some belonging to the more remote clans, who had never even ventured into Toungoo before, we endeavoured to make all feel thoroughly at home under the novel circumstances in which they found themselves. That we did not entirely fail was proved by the interest with which the event was discussed by the people, for many months after it took place.

Considering the state of social relations among these very people only a few years before, in which numbers of different tribes dared not for their very lives pass the boundaries of their scant territories, it certainly was a most interesting and instructive gathering, showing what a better state of things has done for them.

Having remained in Gaykho-land a day longer than we intended, to enable us to effect the restoration of a lad who had been taken away in a foray from a Bwé village, and rejoicing the heart of his mother (a poor widow who had followed us for some marches) thereby, we retraced our footsteps to Layto by the road we came, thus ending a tour which has afforded us many pleasing recollections.

CHAPTER XV.

THE "HAPPY HUNTING-GROUNDS" OF MEEKYIN.

THE representatives of the *Sgan* tribe in Toungoo are confined to that part of the district west of the Sittang river, and are to be met with chiefly on the *Pegu Yoma*, or its numerous spurs.

Between this range and the river a few of their villages are hidden in the high elephant grass or the dense jungle that abounds in the sparsely populated region to the south, and probably would never have been known to anyone but the tax collector, were it not for the "happy hunting-grounds" of Meekyin in their vicinity.

In the "good old days," when under certain conditions commissariat elephants were placed at the disposal of Officers of Government, *Meekyin* was in its glory; but, previous to our departure, this indulgence was withdrawn, and possibly the arrangements for beating up its far-famed jungles, which are hopelessly impenetrable without the aid of elephants, must now be carried out more economically and less efficiently by sportsmen. Probably, too, with less advantage to Government, for the commissariat elephants, when not employed by other departments, seemed to have nothing to do but carry their own food, wag their tails and trunks in

their stables, die of *ennui*, and form subjects for inquests.

In the beginning of May, 1868, we arranged with a few friends to spend a week at Meekyin. The elephants and servants were accordingly sent on to *Bōm-Maddee*, a village about twenty-five miles south-east of Toungoo, and when we cantered up in the evening, with two companions, we found everything arranged comfortably. One of our party, having no pony, was obliged to precede us, and had made himself quite at home in the place, having, by pantomimic gestures, effectually made known his wants, after trying in vain to do so by expressing them in language. The stupid Burmese could not, he complained, understand plain English, and, after airing a few Hindustani phrases for their edification, with unsatisfactory results, they were given up in despair, as idiots who did not understand their own language! Our friend was therefore fain to express his meaning by mute action, when he wanted fowls, eggs, milk, &c., supplementing his dumb show by the crowing of a cock, to make sure of obtaining this chief necessary of a jungle dinner.

The little village of *Bōm-Maddee* was, it is said, a town of considerable importance at one time; probably before the river, which used to flow quite close to it, changed its course. Toungoo history has it that, in A.D. 1191, *Maya-pudee-thee-thoo*, the king of Pagan, stopped here on his way to visit the pagodas near Toungoo, that had been built by the order of Asoka, fourteen centuries before, and during his stay his queen presented him with a son. Great were the festivities that took place in honour

of the auspicious event, the chief element of which, as would be the case in the present day, was a great deal of noisy music. This was more than the delicate nerves of the queen could endure, so the king issued an urgent edict of *Bōm-ma-htee*—"Beat not drums"—a name which has been retained ever since, to the exclusion of the ancient name, which has been forgotten.

Next day we arrived at Banloung, in time for breakfast. Here we found two officers of the 24th Regiment, who were on a shooting tour. The latter pushed on to *Meekyin*, promising to await our arrival there, while we, tempted by the glowing accounts given by the head man of the village, in reference to the sport to be had within easy distance, decided on halting for a day or two.

The village *motsho* or *shikaree* was confident in being able to show us bison (*bos gaurus*) as a small herd had been seen quite lately in the neighbouring jungles, and a graphic account he gave us of the recent experiences of the Chaplain of Toungoo afforded us good grounds for hoping that he would be as good as his word. Our friend, he told us, had suddenly come upon the herd, and was deliberating whether he should stalk a bull on foot or risk disturbing him by attempting to get nearer on the elephant, when the animal settled the question by charging his elephant. So impetuous and so unexpected was his rush that he came in contact with the elephant without giving the reverend gentleman, who is an excellent shot, an opportunity of even raising his gun, which was knocked out of his hand by the concussion. The elephant stood the charge

bravely, and put such a bold face on the matter that the bison made good his retreat, while the motsho, it appears, fell off the elephant in the scuffle, and the sportsman had as much as he could do to cling to the pad to save himself from a similar catastrophe.

This story, which was afterwards confirmed in its more prominent particulars by the chief actor, is, we believe, unparalleled in the annals of bison-shooting. We were not fortunate enough to see any bison, although some of us got snap shots at deer, but without "bagging" any. We also stalked a large herd of *thameng* (brow-antlered rusa); the animals were, however, so wary, that it was impossible to get within range, so that we had to relinquish our pursuit when night came on. Next day, being Sunday, we contented ourselves by moving on to *Meekyin*, a distance of six miles only. There is a capital roomy bungalow here, used as a shooting-box, and far from any village, consequently we were obliged to take with us all our supplies, with the exception of eggs and milk, for which we were dependent on a few Karen cultivators who lived close by. Soon after daybreak we were all ready to commence operations. Each of our party had an elephant, and perched up behind his howdah was one of the recognised motshos, or gamekeepers of this district, or their assistants, the head motsho attaching himself to us, and arranging that the direction of affairs should be given by signals from him.

The campaign was opened soon after we had started, by a good deal of sharp-shooting practice at the little *dray* or hog-deer (*cervus porcinus*), that

popped about in the long grass like rabbits in a clover field, affording us only now and then the chance of a snap shot. Most of us were tyros in the art of shooting from a howdah, which is not to be acquired without much practice; and finding it almost impossible to make sure of these little animals with bullets, spare guns, charged with shot, were taken in hand, but the dray afforded us no further opportunity that day, having apparently been confined to a "hot corner," as they returned from grazing in the plains. We soon after gave up the shot-gun in disgust, after firing at an elk, and, of course, making little or no impression on his tough hide. We had hardly done so when another elk jumped up close before us; the elephant gave a lurch as we rather hurriedly fired, and a white mark on a tree, just above the elk, showed where the ball had gone. The motsho, with a view of consoling us, of course, gave vent to one of those truisms which can be taken in a complimentary sense, and which are as characteristic of the Burmese gamekeeper as of his European congener, reminding us of a polite but truthful Irish follower, who, when a young friend missed a partridge in the stubbles at home, exclaimed, "Begorra, yer Honour, you made feathers fly anyhow!" We were more fortunate afterwards, a fine stag being placed to the credit of our gun.

Several tigers were met with during our stay at *Meekyin*. The first seen rose leisurely within a few yards of the elephant ridden by one of our party, at the extreme end of the line. His rider took steady aim, but unfortunately his gun missed fire, and the tiger vanished instantaneously into the thick jungle.

The brute had evidently been so intent on watching a doe as not to notice the elephant's approach, and the poor doe herself, between terror of her deadly foe on one side, and fear of some wild dogs (*canis rutilus*) who were prowling about on the other, allowed us, to our surprise, to come quite close to her, seeming instinctively to know we were keeping our shots for nobler game. This was the first time we had seen the wild dog of Burmah; they struck us as lithe, graceful animals, something like an English fox, judged from a distance of fifty yards. On another occasion we came on a big tiger that was stalking deer in a plain covered with high grass. His whereabouts were pointed out by a sharp-sighted *motsho*, and we were moving in line to the spot, when the brute became alarmed, and began to slink off; in doing so, a bit of his black and tan coat glinted in the sun's rays, and although he was a hundred and fifty yards off, one of our party could not resist the temptation of having a shot at him. In answer to the report, the tiger whisked his tail into the air, and suddenly disappeared; his whereabouts being indicated by the aforesaid caudal appendage, which was seen moving above the grass straight and stiff, something like a pump-handle. The sight excited even our phlegmatic mahouts, who drove their elephants as fast they could go, but without being able to overtake the tiger. Shortly afterwards, as we came to a tangled mass of jungle, we heard a peculiar noise, something like the sharp bark an elk gives when he is startled; one of our party went round a clump of bamboos from whence the sound proceeded, and, to his surprise, saw a tiger,

somewhat under full growth, sitting on his haunches like a dog, and amusing himself by giving vent to the short barks we had noticed, and which is a peculiarity in the habits of the "king of the forest," regarding which we had never heard before. His discoverer shot him, as we afterwards ascertained, through the body, but too far back to disable him at once. The brute crawled into a thicket hard by, which we surrounded with the elephants; but so thick was the undergrowth, that although he was occasionally almost beneath our feet, we could not see him. What with the elephants trumpeting, some with rage and others from fear, the mahouts urging them on with loud vociferations, partly abusive and partly endearing; the cries of the motshos, "Here he is!" "There he goes!" together with the encouraging shouts of some of the sportsmen, and what with our own elephant taking it into his head to perform first a *pas de seul* on a large tuft of grass which he evidently considered concealed his foe, and secondly, to charge the same tuft with his tusks, putting us in imminent danger of being thrown out of the howdah, if not on to the tiger, the scene was certainly enlivening if not exciting. Diligently as we searched we could not get the tiger then, but his body was found some time afterwards.

One day was devoted to some famous jungles, where it was said there were several bisons; it was agreed accordingly that no other game should be fired at. About midday, however, several deer jumped up simultaneously, and a stag proving too great a temptation to one of our party, he fired at it, and the spell being broken, it was of course useless

to search for bison anywhere within hearing of the report, so it was unanimously decided to make a halt for breakfast. This meal offered a pleasant diversion, giving us an opportunity of resting ourselves and the elephants in the hottest time of the day. Two of our friends had a capital contrivance with them in the shape of a common cooking-pot, into which venison, pork, ducks, jungle fowls, and everything they shot, was put, and seasoned with different sauces; and as it was hermetically sealed every time the cover was put on, the contents remained good for an indefinite time; a valuable desideratum in a country where the usual supplies are difficult to procure. This "perpetual stew-pot," as we called it, for want of a better name, was invariably brought out, and with a few roasted potatoes, furnished a repast to which we always did full justice.

After breakfast we all promised to do our best to resist temptation in the way of other game, in the hope of seeing bison, and although many deer were on foot, we refrained from firing at them. We were rewarded for our self-denial by the sight of a magnificent bull-bison just as we were going to give up in despair. A companion on our left came point-blank upon him as he lay alone in a dense thicket he had chosen for his midday siesta, and fired right into his face. The bison, probably just waked up out of a nap, was somewhat startled, and instead of charging, crashed through the tangled and apparently impenetrable undergrowth as if it were made of paper, and crossing a little glade, within twenty yards of us, gave us a fair shot as he sped along. The impetus with which the noble beast made his rush carried him appa-

rently unscathed for some yards farther, when he made a half somersault, picked himself up again, and endeavoured to continue his mad career, but to no purpose. He was evidently badly hit, as he limped painfully along in the comparatively open jungle he first took to, so much so as to give us hopes of overtaking him on the elephants. This was soon proved futile, as the latter, though urged to their topmost speed by their excited drivers, were soon left behind.

Some of our party then stalked the wounded animal on foot, guided by the motshos, who proved excellent trackers, and though they evidently were quite close to him on several occasions, as his halting places, clotted with blood, indicated, they were obliged to give up the tantalizing pursuit as night set in.

The next day, no restrictions being considered necessary, nothing in the shape of game was allowed to pass within shooting distance without being challenged.

A herd of wild pigs afforded some excitement, as well as amusement, but, although we joined in the *battue*, it was not without compunction, for anyone who has followed the "mighty boar" on horseback, with a spear, would as soon think of using a gun or rifle to encompass his death in a "pig-sticking" country as a fox-hunter would of shooting a fox in England, but as nowhere in Burmah is the noble sport practicable, the wild boar, one of the most courageous of animals, whose prowess has long been the theme of prose and song, has to submit to a more ignoble fate.

It is not our intention to weary the reader with

a detailed account of our exploits, although interesting to us at the time, and looked back to as a joyous holiday, or even to tell of the wonderful shots made by some of our party, much less to chronicle the many misses, suffice it to say we had average sport, and were on the whole well satisfied with our success.

On our way back, one of our followers went to pay his respects to a monk, who lived in a large and finely carved monastery on the banks of the river, shaded by lofty and beautiful trees, and, as it was not the etiquette to go empty-handed, he took some venison for the senior abbot. The old man with whom we entered into conversation favoured us with a homily on the wickedness of taking life, applying, as a moral, the case of our predecessor, of whom he predicted a sad end, unless he gave up his unholy practice of killing animals. He congratulated us, at the same time, on having escaped such sin. Honesty prevented us accepting the implied compliment without remark, and the venerable abbot was not a little concerned to hear such a terrible confession from one of whom he had hoped better things. We delicately suggested that his accepting and eating game that had been killed by others was something like being an accessory after the fact, but this he maintained—with the jesuitical though not convincing casuistry of Buddhists when assailed with this argument—was a "very different thing."

We returned to head-quarters without further incident, determining, if opportunity should again offer, to revisit a place which so well repays the trouble.

CHAPTER XVI.

KARENNEE, OR THE COUNTRY OF THE RED KARENS.

WHEN standing on the vantage-ground presented by the "bald head" of *Nattoung*, with our feet resting on grassy undulations, reminding us of English downs, and the flora around us giving evidence of a temperate climate, we obtained a bird's-eye view of a country, lying in a north-eastern direction, consisting for the most part of a fine table-land, elevated about 3,000 feet above the sea, enjoying a climate somewhat similar to what we then appreciated so much; remarkable, also, for lovely scenery, which it is said no word-painting can picture to the eye; with a population barbarous to a degree, but extremely interesting to the ethnologist, as well as to the philanthropist; with many capabilities for improvement under a good Government, but at the same time almost hopelessly degraded. A country where it may be said—

"Every prospect pleases, but only man is vile,"

and known as Karennee, or the territory of the *Kayas*, or Red Karens.

The graphic and interesting accounts published by Mr. O'Riley, which filled up the blank that existed in the geography and ethnography of this part of the country before his visit, had made us well acquainted with Karennee, and we had therefore a great desire to visit the country, in order to familiarize ourselves with the scenes so vividly

described by O'Riley, to cement, by personal communication, the friendly relations that existed between the chiefs and ourselves, and to promote, if possible, by friendly advice and council, the true interests of the people, although, owing to the policy enjoined on us, we were not in a position to listen to the prayer of the chief of Western Karennee, beseeching us to take the management of the country into our own hands, with a view of saving it from hopeless anarchy.

We were also anxious to see, in their own homes, a people whom we had hitherto known only as energetic traders, who yearly visited the Toungoo district, bringing with them buffaloes, black cattle, ponies, sticlac, and other produce in exchange for salt, fish-paste (*gnapee*), cotton twist, beads, &c., or from a more objectionable notoriety they enjoyed as caterers, who, when opportunity offered, made raids into British territory in pursuit of plunder.

We were, however, unable to carry out our wishes, but as any notice of the mountain Karens of Burmah would be incomplete without some account of the Red Karens, who play such an important part in the history of that region, we have availed ourselves of the published accounts of Mr. O'Riley, Doctors Mason and Richardson, as well as of a manuscript favoured us by Mr. Bunker, to complement or to confirm our own inquiries, with the view of placing before our readers a short account of Karennee and its people.

The Red Karens or Kayas.

The same difficulty presents itself in tracing, with

any degree of correctness, the origin of the Kayas or Red Karens, as is the case with other tribes of Karens, for neither have any written character, and we must therefore content ourselves with legends handed down to successive generations by oral agency alone.

From these traditions, it would appear that the Red Karens entered Upper Burmah with the Chinese, whom they term their elder brothers, but as the latter marched quicker than the Karens, they left them behind.

The Karens endeavoured, unsuccessfully, to overtake the Chinese, and on coming to a place where the latter had left a bundle, containing, amongst other things, a book written on metal and ivory plates, they came to the conclusion that their elder brothers had determined not to wait for them any longer, and had left them this book as their portion of the family inheritance.

On receiving this token they made no more attempts to follow the Chinese, but stopped and built cities and villages in the country where this separation took place.

The city in which their king's palace was situated they called *Hotalay*, or the "Gold and Silver City," and we have elsewhere endeavoured to identify it with the city of *Mien*, with its gold and silver towers mentioned by Marco Polo, as the various Karen accounts, although differing in some particulars, agree in indicating the site of *Hotalay* as in the vicinity of the then capital of the Burman Empire, which we have assumed to be Pagan.*

* Yule's "Marco Polo," chaps. lii and liv.

After the Karens had remained for a long time in the country round about the "Gold and Silver City," they were driven away, they say, with the Chinese and some western foreigners by the Burmese, who utterly destroyed their palace, cities, and villages.

The Burmese annals place the abandonment of Pagan in 1284, which possibly may be contemporaneous with the flight of the Karens, although no information regarding the probable date of the occurrence can be ascertained from them.

From what Mr. Cross learnt, it would appear that the Red Karens fled immediately after their disasters to the country where they are now found, and have occupied it ever since;* but, from the version quoted by Mr. O'Riley, "it seems that they first sought an asylum in a south-western direction, but had only time to plant and reap one crop of rice when the Burmese attacked them again and drove them from their newly acquired settlements. The different nationalities that had collected together accordingly separated."†

The western foreigners proceeded in a northward direction; the Chinese returned to their own country, while the Karens went off to *Noungwè* in the Shan territory, west of the Salwen river to be pushed farther south into the western ranges of the Mobyay State, where they remained unmolested for some years.

Further pressure on the part of the Burmese made them seek a refuge still farther south, and driving out the Shans who occupied what is now the

* Manuscript notes from Mr. Cross.

† "Journ. Ind. Arch."

northern portion of Karennee, they were at last able to secure for themselves a territory, which, from the many natural advantages it possesses, affords them a secure and a desirable resting-place, where they have for centuries been, to all intents and purposes, entirely independent.

Karennee or the country of the *Kayas*, was formerly under the dominion of a single prince or chief, from whom *Koontee* and *Koonsha*, sons of *Kephogyee* the old chief, referred to by Mr. O'Riley, claim to be the lineal descendants.

For all practical purposes it may now be divided into—western Karennee ruled jointly by Koontee and Koonsha, and eastern Karennee ruled by Saw-la-paw.

There are two small districts to the north of the two large states, ruled by *Pho-Bya* and *Kephogué*, and also one to the south ruled by *Pando*, the successor of *Bandakay*; and though more or less independent of their stronger neighbours, have no political significance whatever.

Pando, in 1866 or 1867, endeavoured to recover his prestige by fighting with *Saw-la-paw*, but was utterly discomfited, while the other lesser chiefs seem content to "accept the situation."

A detailed genealogical history of the most prominent chiefs would be somewhat difficult owing to the confusion that arises from the number of aliases by which they, or their ancestors, have been known, and because different writers in consequence have occasionally given different names to one and the same person. We shall not, therefore, weary our readers with attempting to unravel the difficulty, but content

ourselves with giving a *résumé* of the most prominent points worthy of notice.

As far as we can learn *Nga-kay* or *Nga-ray*, an ancestor of Koontee's, is the last chief who had undivided sway over Karennee.

During his rule a Burman who had rebelled against his own Government, took refuge with Nga-kay, who employed him as a writer and interpreter, as well as in various political duties. Having won the confidence of Nga-kay, he was placed in authority over southern Karennee, and assumed the name of *Bandakay* after the principal village assigned him. Mr. Bunker refers to him as *Pha-bo-mengyee*, but most authorities assume this title to belong exclusively to another Burman known as Moung *Hpōn*, a native of *Mo-tso-bo*, the capital of Burmah under Alompra (the founder of the present dynasty) who took refuge with the Sgan Karens soon afterwards.

Moung Hpōn, who was a scion of the previous dynasty, in consequence of an intrigue with the daughter of the heir apparent whom he married, was obliged to fly from the vicinity of royalty to Toungoo, and afterwards into the Karen hills to escape the vengeance of his wife's father.

He first resided near the head-waters of the *Khay-ma-pyoo** or *Mookee* stream; and while there assuming to work miracles he persuaded the credulous Karens that a great harvest of rice was owing to his having exercised his supernatural powers in their behalf. His fame as a great prophet was accordingly spread throughout Karennee, and he was henceforward known as *Bupaw* or "Rice bin."

* Khaymapyoo, Burmese tin-producing.

An ancestor of Koontee named *Lolya*, who was then chief of the Red Karens, hearing of his fame offered him an asylum; but as the Sgan Karens with whom he lived declined to part with their prophet, he was compelled to make his escape from them in company with the emissaries of *Lolya* who carried him on their shoulders to a village called *Saw-kee-koo*, which was assigned him for a residence. Bupaw, after living here about two years became very arrogant, and demanded that the Red Karens should salute him after the Burmese fashion. As they refused to comply, he left them and returned to his old friends at *Mookee*, with whom he remained some time, but fearing the vengeance of the Burmese who were jealous of his authority, he left Mookee and again took refuge with the Karennees, who received him gladly, and made every effort to retain him. After staying in his old village, Saw-kee-koo, for a season he was given another village on the *Poong* or *Nawpolo* stream, chiefly because the areca nuts and betel leaves of which he was passionately fond, and which were not procurable at Saw-kee-koo were obtainable there.

Bupaw, owing to his alleged possession of miraculous power, and his connection with royalty, was looked upon by the simple Karens as a being of superior race to themselves; they consequently flocked round him till the number of his adherents greatly exceeded that of any other chief in the country. He was styled the *Pha-bo-daw* or *Pha-bo-mengyee*, a name of local import merely, meaning "The Royal Father, Grandfather Ruler."

Pha-bo-daw died in the ninetieth year of his age,

about 1854 A.D., and, for a short period, the chieftainship was exercised by his two sons successively, but as they died childless the second was succeeded by *Sawlaphaw*, a grandson of Pha-bo-daw's through his second wife, and has been exercised by him ever since. He is decidedly the most powerful chief in Karennee.

From all accounts, then, it would appear that the chiefs of western Karennee are the lineal descendants of the ancient Karen dynasty, and the chief of eastern Karennee is of Burmese origin.

Dr. Richardson was the first traveller who has written about Karennee.

He passed through the country in 1837, when deputed by the Commissioner of the Tenasserim provinces to the Shan States, in connection with Ava, and charged with the conduct of a caravan of traders from Moulmein. It was then officially reported that, though the inhabitants were "rude, they were very friendly." His report, after having been buried in a Government record-room for more than thirty years, has been published by order of Parliament.

Mr. O'Riley, when Deputy Commissioner of Toungoo and Showé-gyeen, visited Karennee in 1856–57, and again in 1863–64, and has published valuable and interesting accounts of his experiences. His successor, Captain Lloyd, also visited the country, but we do not know whether his report has been published. Both of these officers were received in the most friendly spirit by the chiefs and their people. Dr. Mason, the first missionary who made himself personally acquainted with the country, arrived there in 1859, and was treated with much

respect and attention. He succeeded in establishing schools and teachers among the people, and has always been held in high esteem by the chiefs. Other missionaries have travelled in his footsteps since then, and have experienced the same kind treatment.

Mr. O'Riley, by his conciliatory behavour, coupled with admirable tact, succeeded not only in establishing a general feeling of respect and good-will in his own favour, as well as towards the English Government, but did much towards cementing a better understanding between the different tribes. So great was the confidence reposed by the chiefs of Western Karennee in the advantages of British rule that they, on more than one occasion, stated their desire to Mr. O'Riley of placing the entire control of the country in the hands of our Government, or of Mr. O'Riley himself, if he consented to remain with them; for they feared that, in the event of his returning without bringing matters to the satisfactory conclusion they suggested, the same anarchy and unhappiness that had obtained for many years would follow, and the Burmese would endeavour to possess themselves of the country—a proceeding they were determined to resist to the last extremity, for owing to the atrocities committed by the latter when they invaded the country some years before, they could never consent to submit to their rule.

The same desire has since been frequently expressed to Mr. O'Riley's successors, by *Kephogyee*, as well as by his sons on their father's death. Our Government, while acknowledging with becoming courtesy the confidence of the chiefs, has invariably

informed them that it did not feel itself in a position to incur such a responsibility.

A treaty of friendship between the two countries, as well as a brotherhood of Mr. O'Riley and the chiefs, *Kephogyee* and *Kephogué*, was ratified according to the custom of the country, on the occasion of Mr. O'Riley's visit.

The ceremony of interchange of fraternity entails on the performers the necessity of sucking a portion of each other's blood from a puncture in the arm, or by infusing a drop in water and drinking it. And Mr. O'Riley, during previous tours among other tribes, found it necessary to conform to this custom, as without it the tribe refused permission to pass their lands, and he should have been necessitated to draw blood by a sharper process, and so closed their chance of friendship for ever.*

Hitherto, in similar cases, Mr. O'Riley has been fortunate in being allowed to nominate a substitute for this process, but on his proposing to follow precedent on this occasion, by appointing his native assistant, he was informed that, though such agency might be allowed in the case of inferior chiefs, where such "great men" was concerned, the interchange of each other's blood alone would suffice.

To Mr. O'Riley's great relief, "it was stated that the flesh of a bullock killed and eaten by both parties, each receiving one of the horns of the animal, was a rite considered by them of equal weight with that of the blood-draught, and usually performed by them when a number of persons be-

* O'Riley's "Tour to Karennee," note 3.

came friends and brothers."* He therefore joyfully consented to this ordeal, which implied that "like as they had partaken of the bullock's flesh which had entered their bodies, so might their friendship remain in each other's hearts and there steadfastly abide so long as the horns continued crooked!"

These horns were afterwards mounted in silver, with a suitable inscription, one being returned to the chief and the other retained by Mr. O'Riley. *Kephogyee*, in giving over the one horn to Mr. O'Riley said, that it should be a token of amity for ever between him and the Western Karennee chiefs, and that its possession by any other individual who might receive it from Mr. O'Riley would entitle him to the same attention and consideration as were due to him. One horn is still carefully kept and pointed to with pride by Kephogyee's sons, the other is retained by Mr. O'Riley's representative, the Deputy-Commissioner of Toungoo. It is due to the chiefs of Western Karennee to record that the promises made by them on the occasion have been faithfully kept, for they have ever done their best to meet the wishes, and otherwise evince their respect for Mr. O'Riley's successors, as well as for the Government they represent.

The Eastern and Western Karennees may be said to have been in a chronic state of warfare for many years. It is true that a somewhat better feeling predominated after Mr. O'Riley's visit, although he never was able to secure the full confidence of the eastern chiefs, owing to Burmese jealousy and intrigue, and to bad influence exercised

* O'Riley's "Karenne."

on them by the notorious *Menloung*, who gave us so much trouble at the time.

Menloung, meaning in Burmese embryo king or ruler, is a title which many impostors adopt, who either think they have, or wish to persuade others they have, "a mission" to subvert constituted authority.

This man, we learn from O'Riley, was originally a doctor, and being gifted with a sagacity and intelligence far superior to the ignorant Karens, he established an influence with the chiefs of Eastern Karennee which was productive of much evil.

Menloung waged war with the English soon after their occupancy of the country, and proved for a time that he could well hold his own in the intricate jungles of the *Yonselen*. After a time, however, he was driven with his followers out of English territory, and remained with *Sawlaphaw* till his death, which occurred a few years ago.*

O'Riley's visits were nevertheless attended with good results, for the Eastern Karennees were induced to open their country to the Shan traders

* "The Karens of the Yonselen have been remarkable for several generations for the impostors that have successively risen up among them, who with religious pretensions cover political projects. They begin as Boo-khos, heads or leaders of worship, and exhort the people to meet together for singing and prayer. The Boo-khoo teaches them to pray that the long oppressed Karen natives, who have no books, no king, no government, may speedily be delivered from their enemies. If he succeeds in gathering together a sufficient number of followers, his next step is to declare himself what the Burmese denominate a Menloung, an embryo king, or ruler."—Dr. Mason, "American Bapt. Miss. Mag.," March, 1862.

from the states lying to their north-east, along the course of the Salwen on its west bank—a valuable concession, which promised to result in great prosperity to the internal commerce with our territories.

Again, the bond of friendship and good faith which he effected with the chiefs of Western Karennee secured protection to the Shan traders who might venture from the north. And measures were also initiated, although unfortunately never matured, for a large immigration of Shans into our territory, by the establishment of a trading mart on the *Khay-ma-pyoo* stream, which Mr. O'Riley hoped "would form a nucleus for a continuous stream of immigrants, and open out a means of commercial adventure to the more distant Shan States to the north, and the Chinese frontier province of Yunan."

These anticipations might have been realised if the different chiefs could have been brought to understand that it was in their own interest and that of their people to work together; but, unfortunately, the separation of interest that now and has ever obtained in the eastern and western divisions under chiefs inimical to each other, precludes this probability. The old animosities which had been temporarily allayed through the influence of Mr. O'Riley and other officers, unfortunately cropped up again owing to the frequent raids and other aggressions made on both sides, thereby causing a very general feeling of insecurity in the country, and consequently giving a serious blow to trade.

Sawlaphaw, the chief of Eastern Karennee, who has sworn allegiance to the King of Burmah, and who has been always covertly, if not openly, sup-

ported by the Burmese Government did his best to work this interest in his own favour by inducing the Court of Mandalay to believe that *Kephogyee* had espoused the interests of the *Myingōn* prince, a rebel son of the King of Burmah, who had fled to him for refuge. Burmese troops were accordingly posted on the frontier of Western Karennee, and it was with some reason the chief was obliged to solicit our assistance with a view of preventing the seizure of his country by the Burmese, who were enraged at the chief's refusing to give up the Myingōn prince, either to the English or Burmese Governments.

The chief Kephogyee and his sons were greatly embarrassed at the position of affairs in consequence of the prince having fled to their country, and the pressure put on them to give him up. And though they acknowledged that it would give them much satisfaction if the prince could be induced to leave them, they, greatly to their credit, insisted on the right of asylum to political offenders, and refused at all hazards to be guilty of such baseness as to surrender a person who, under these circumstances, had thrown himself on their protection.

The British Government, although it did not perhaps consider that the Burmese authorities would go so far as to annex the country, thought fit to impress upon his majesty its desire that the independence of Western Karennee should be respected, a hint that was sufficiently suggestive in preventing the ulterior measures anticipated by the Western Karennees.

Many interesting particulars relating to the Red Karens since our occupation of Pegu have been

related by Mr. O'Riley and his successors, but the foregoing crude outline of their history, it is hoped, will be found sufficiently comprehensive to the general reader.

KARENNEE; ITS GEOGRAPHICAL POSITION, GEOLOGICAL CHARACTER, POPULATION; CLIMATE; ANIMAL KINGDOM; PRODUCTS; RELIGION; SOCIAL CUSTOMS; GOVERNMENT.

Karennee; its Geographical Position with its Physical Aspect and Features.

As a minute geographical description of this country, embracing its physical aspect and features, would be out of place in this work, we shall confine ourselves to the details most deserving attention.

Karennee, or the country inhabited by the *Kayas*, or Red Karens, consists for the most part of an extensive plateau, elevated about 3,000 feet above the sea, and lying between the parallels of 18° to 20° N. lat., and 97° to 99° E. long., with an area of about 7,200 square miles.

For the sake of convenience, the range of mountains running north and south, and averaging in height 6,000 feet, which are known as the "Great Watershed," may be assumed as the boundary of the country to the west, just as we assume it to be our eastern boundary; for, although there are numerous quasi-independent tribes on both the eastern and western slopes of this chain, they are nominally dependent on the Karennee or English territories respectively.

On the south it is divided from the Showé-gyen

district of British Burmah by the *Phakhyoung*,* an affluent of the Salwen.

On the north by the Shan states tributary to Burmah proper, and on the east by the *Salwen* and *Zimmay* territory.

"From the southern extremity the Salwen river trends in a north easterly direction, giving an irregular and wide-extended base to a cone-like shape for the whole territory."*

In his topographical description of the country, Mr. O'Riley remarks, "descending upon the central portion of *Karennee* from the western ranges, at a height of 6,200 feet, the lower formations present the appearance of a country of widely arched undulations of low altitude, enlosed between high ranges of mountains on its southern and eastern faces, and extending in unbroken wave-like lines to the horizon northward, while the prospect to the west is closed by the subordinate ranges of mountain limestone, fractured on the sides and ridges into fantastic shapes of high-walled and battlemented forts, with turrets and gigantic buttresses in a state of ruin.

"Reaching the springing of the undulations it is then ascertained that they have a higher altitude than was supposed when seen from above, and that the converging lines form gently-sloping valleys of a quarter to one and a half miles in breadth; the rounded hills occupy (in the southern portion) about one-third of the whole latitudinal surface of the country, and incline with graceful curvature to the northward, until merged in a vast plain, which extends from that point far into the Shan states."

* O'Riley's notices of "Karennee."

All who have visited *Karennee* speak in high terms of the picturesque beauty of its scenery, which presents a great contrast in some respects to the more sparsely populated country to the west of the "Great Watershed," occupied by tribes of non-nomadic tendencies.

The surface of the country shows that it has been occupied for many generations for not a vestige of the primeval forest remains, and as the proportion of population to area is comparatively great, the people, for their own sustenance, as well as for their numerous herds of cattle and other live stock, have been forced to pay the greatest attention to the land which is carefully laid out, the divisions being marked with stone walls or hedges, as in more civilised countries.*

To quote Mr. O'Riley again, "The numerous villages marking the home of the natives, the graceful foliage of the gigantic bamboo, associated with the banyan and cotton tree, afford a rich variety of shade in relief on the bright red colour of the soil, the more distant chain of mountains to the eastward, with their tops enveloped in clouds, the nearer limestone hills seen through a dim blue haze in rugged outline, the vast plain beneath shining with all the golden hues of autumn, and the park-like appearance of numerous enclosures, with herds of cattle grazing near the watercourses, all combine to form a picture

* So with the *Khoonds* in Orissa, when *Goomsur* was incorporated with British territory. "Their fields were found to be in a high state of cultivation, and their villages swarmed with bullocks, goats, swine, and poultry."—Marshman's "History of India," vol. ii, p. 452.

of surpassing magnificence and home-like tranquil beauty."

Geological Character.—As has already been described, the country is enclosed by rugged limestone ranges, forming a considerable contrast to the general features of the country; but, as is common in this formation, the "action of upheavement" is visible on the face of the plateau, in the shape of undulations whose surface show that the body of the country is of the same character. Mr. O'Riley says this limestone differs from the usual character of mountain limestone, both in colour and density, and that it is in general character a marble of great density, adapted for all useful and ornamental purposes.

Tin-producing.—In the southern part of the country there are tin mines on the *Khé-ma-pyn* stream, which have been worked for a long time with indifferent success by the Karens. The process of working, as described by Mr. O'Riley, is rude in the extreme, and so inefficient that at least one-fifth of the metal remains in the scoria. He considered that if these deposits were worked by Chinese or Shans, even with their inefficient method, they would prove an inexhaustible source of wealth to the undertakers.

Population.—From an estimate made by Mr. O'Riley based on inquiries on the spot, and in which he allows five souls to each house, we have a population for *Western Karennee* of 36,800 souls, and *Eastern Karennee* of 180,000, making a total population for the whole country of 216,800, or about twenty-eight souls to the square mile.

From a return given by Dr. Mason based on the

reports of his assistants, the population of Eastern Karennee was estimated at 150,000, and Western Karennee 50,000, giving a total population of 200,000 souls, or pretty nearly the result arrived at by Mr. O'Riley.

Climate.—All who have written about Karennee speak in raptures of its climate. The narrators were there, it is true, in the best season of the year, when the dandelion, violet, and forget-me-not, were in flower, and when hoar-frost was occasionally seen; but there is every reason to believe that the favourable accounts we have heard of the remaining portion of the year are to be relied on.

Sheltered by high ranges of mountains, the force of the south-west monsoon becomes spent before it reaches the country, and the rainy season is more intermittent and less violent than on the western slopes of the "Great Watershed."

The temperature of the hottest season is described as comparatively mild with that which obtains in British territory, and is generally equable, excepting in December and January, when it is considerably colder. Mr. O'Riley, who was in Karennee for one month of the cold season, considered that the mean average then of the uplands might be placed at 62°, and that of the plains at 66°. He says, "Of the exceeding salubrity of the climate there can be no doubt; where neither fogs nor miasmatic vapours prevail, and no dense jungle exists to taint the pure air with its noxious exhalations from the decomposition of its humus, the conclusion is easily made without the corroborative testimony of statistical returns.

Animal Kingdom.—Of domestic animals,—black cattle, buffaloes, ponies, pigs, and goats, are numerous. The cattle are trained to carry panniers.

Of Carnivorous Animals,—leopards of different kinds are found, but are not numerous, owing to want of cover. The same may be said of the *Rusa deer* elk, the *barking deer*, and the *wild goat*.

Of Game, the hare, brown-backed pheasant, and red-legged partridge, are often met with.

Its Products, Spontaneous and Agricultural.—Of spontaneous products,—*teak*, *sticlac*, and *tin*, are the most valuable.

Moulmein owes not a little of its importance, as a timber-trading port, to the quantity of valuable teak exported thereto from Karennee.

It is chiefly worked by Moulmein foresters, who pay a fee to the chief of the locality where the timber is found, for the privilege of working it. The timber trade was then estimated by Mr. O'Riley at not much less than three lakhs of rupees (3,000*l.*) per annum.*

Owing, however, to deficient conservancy, and the improvident way operations have been carried on, the forests are said to be becoming less valuable. The chronic state of warfare that exists between East and West Karennee, as well as the constant disputes amongst the foresters, effectually serve as a bar to any systematic working of the forests so much as to affect the Moulmein timber trade considerably.

Perhaps next in importance is the *sticlac*, which is collected in September, or soon after the rains in

* "British Burmah Administration Report for 1869–70."

the ravines and other parts of the high country at the base of the ranges which cannot be cultivated, and disposed of by barter on the spot to the Shans, or taken by the people themselves to Toungoo through the *Tsawkoo* country, by a route opened by the writer in 1869, a description of which is given in another chapter.

Mr. O'Riley, in 1857, estimated that about 140 tons of *sticlac* were annually exported, with a relative value of 8,000 rupees (800*l.*) received by the native collector.

Tin, as before noticed, is worked by a rude process in the southern portion of the country, where "it is found as an ore, the peroxide of the metal plentifully distributed throughout the course of the stream, which bears its name, *Khé-ma-pyn.*"* The value of the yearly out-turn Mr. O'Riley roughly estimated at 13,000 rupees, or 1,300*l.*

No recent information has been obtained of the actual quantity or value of the above products.

Among agricultural products may be mentioned red and white rice, millet, and a kind of buckwheat, "the last two being used chiefly in the manufacture of the fermented liquor called *Khoung.*"† To these may be added the usual variety of esculents found with other tribes in Burmah.

Manufactures.—The Kayas, or Red Karens, although devoid of knowledge of many of the useful arts, according to Dr. Mason, make their own knives, axes, swords, spears, hoes, bangles, silver ornaments, earthenware, bits and bridles, saddles and stirrups.

* O'Rileys "Karennee."

† Ibid.

They also weave coarse but durable articles of clothing for themselves.* They are dependent on the Shans and other traders for most of their other wants.

Character of the Kayas, or Red Karens.—In the *Kayas*, or Red Karens, we have a people in point of natural endowments perhaps superior to all other tribes of Karens, and, in this respect, equalling the Burmese and Shans; impulsive without reflection, and for that reason less apathetic than either, but at the same time distinguished for their savage and intractable nature, and for their turbulent and undisciplined character.

Notorious for their unrelenting cruelty and ferocity, for their utter disregard of life in the absence of any controlling power, and characterised by such a want of good faith between members of the same community as to nullify the proverb of "honour among thieves," the Red Karens afford an instance of a society whose social relations are the most degraded, and, with the exception of not being cannibals, not more civilised than the most barbarous tribes of Africa.

Implacable to their enemies, they are equally relentless in the case of their neighbours. In fact, Mr. Marshman's character of the *Bheels*, one of the aboriginal tribes of India, which came under British rule in 1790, when we took Kandesh, might, *mutatis mutandis*, be applied to them. He says,† "The

* Dr. Richardson, writing twenty years before, says, "They have no trades nor manufactures excepting of the clothes they wear, and of gongs, and of a particular kind of brass drum, peculiar to themselves."

† Marshman's "History of India," vol. ii, p. 444.

Bheels were a race of unmitigated sávages, without any sense of natural religion, violating all law, defying all authority, and habitually indulging in drink, licentiousness, and murder. They eschewed all honest labour, and lived by the chase or by plunder. From their mountain fastnesses they poured down upon the plains, sacked the villages, drove off the cattle, and carried off the chief men, whom they held to ransom."

The Red Karen has no scruple in selling friends or relations into hopeless slavery, if they unhappily become indebted to him.

"Always armed to the teeth, and carrying all he holds dear in the indispensable bag slung on his shoulder, he is prepared to guard his property or add to it, as occasion may require, his sole object being security to himself and plunder of his weaker neighbours."*

Following the custom of the tribes on the west of the Watershed, they pay no attention to cleanliness, either of person or habitation, and enjoy an existence surrounded by filth. Bathing is resorted to only as an invigorating process after the fatigue of marching or carrying burdens, and not apparently for cleansing purposes, as in the operation of ablution the enamelling of oily dirt in which they are encased as successfully resists the action of the water as the plumage of an aquatic bird.

Like all the Karens who have not been converted to Christianity, the *Kayas* drink a fermented liquor called *Khoung* to excess. Mr. O'Riley remarks that they regard it "as a panacea for

* O'Riley.

all the ills that flesh is heir to;" moderation in the use of this beverage appears to be the exception to the rule, and Dean Swift's fifth reason for drinking, the prevailing excuse for intoxication, whenever an opportunity offers.

In common with all the tribes in this region, they may be said to be omnivorous, as nothing that is not absolutely poisonous is excluded from their bill of fare, on account of being common or unclean.

To this there is a notable exception in the case of the chiefs of Western Karennee (if not of Eastern Karennee) who are strict vegetarians, but do not eat rice, on the strength of a custom handed down by their ancestors from ancient times.*

Their manners and customs are shaped by their gross superstition, fear being the only governing principle in all their acts, consequently divination by fowls' bones, and the use of charms to avert evil are constantly resorted to.

It is not surprising, then, to find from one author that "chastity is remarkably loose,"† and from another that "female virtue is unknown,"‡ among them.

In common with some of the tribes of *Singphos* and Kakhyens, the "commerce of the sexes among young people is defended as nothing wrong, because

* *Hwiu Seng* and *Sung Yun* Buddhist pilgrims from China to India in 518 A.D., talking of *Ouchang* (Udyana), north of Peshawur, say, "The king of the country religiously observes a vegetable diet."—Beal's "Travels of Buddhist Pilgrims," p. 188.

Marco Polo noticing the people of *Pashai* or *Udyana*, they live on flesh and rice.—Yule's "Marco Polo," i, p. 155.

† Dr. Mason.

‡ Rev. A. Bunker.

it is our custom,"* the penalty for the seduction of an unmarried woman being only ten rupees, or one pound, while in the case of a wife, as the property is more valuable, the transgressor has to pay ten times that amount.

With such objectionable traits of character, one gladly turns to a pleasing feature recorded by Mr. O'Riley, viz., "the affection shown by the husband to his wife and children, but especially to the latter."

"Where this exists," he continues, "there is ample room for hope that the nature of the individual is not so debased as to be beyond the power of amelioration, and that the inculcating the moral principles of civilization, will have the same good effect of elevating him in the social scale of the human race, which it has done with myriads still more barbarous than the *Kayas*."

Physical Characteristics of the Kayas or Red Karens.

For a description of the physical characteristics of the Red Karens, we cannot do better than quote Mr. O'Riley, who gave considerable attention to the subject. He says, "surrounded as the Kayas are by tribes and races of peoples whose physiognomical characters mark them as belonging to the pure Mongolian type, it is somewhat remarkable that they should preserve a distinctive difference in mould of form and feature, and particularly in their carriage, which, to an eye accustomed to the unvarying high cheek

* Dr. Mason.

bones, square lower jaw, and low head of the *Bwés** (wild Karens), and the elongated features of the Shans, their more angular noses and oblique eyes, renders the disparity still more striking. In size the skull of the *Kayas* is smaller as a general rule than that of the Karens† and Shans; in form it is intermediate between the two; the anterior part is small and less developed than that of the Karen, and the posterior part so uniform in its outline as to present a semi-spherical appearance when viewed from the front.

"The size of the Kayas, as a general standard, may be considered as exceeding that of the Karens, the ordinary height being assumed at five feet seven inches, but many exceed that, though rarely reaching the height of six feet. Where, in the nomadic races of the Karens, the body is found square, low and thick set, with the pelvis broad and expanded, these features in the Kayas are modified to a more upright frame, narrow and sloping shoulders, longer neck and body, with limbs more in proportion to the length of the vertebral column, giving to the *tout ensemble* a more active and pleasing outline than that of the sturdy mountain tribes. The same difference is observable in the lower extremities of the Kayas, the thigh and leg bones have a symmetry of proportion, &c."

Colonel Yule,‡ apparently on the authority of Dr. Richardson, says, "The Red Karens are a people

* It has been determined by Dr. Mason that the Red Karens belong to the *Bghai* or *Bwé* family.

† Meaning other tribes of Karens.

‡ Yule's "Ava," p. 297.

of small stature, with spindle shanks and projecting stomachs," and, however true this description may have been as regards some of the Kayas met by Dr. Richardson, it certainly is not applicable to them as a nation.* One remarkable feature noticed by most travellers is that the women equal, and often exceed, the men in height and bulk, and this is rationally accounted for from the fact of the women doing most of the outdoor work, while the men are on the war-path, or idly loitering about their villages.

Another peculiarity noticed is the disproportionate size of the calf of the female *Kaya* compared with the male, which Mr. O'Riley attributes to the custom of wearing masses of beads below the knee, and to their habit of carrying children and heavy loads on their backs. He records instances of young women, not more than 18 years of age, in whose case "from the effect of the pressure of beads alone (of four or five lbs. on each limb) the calf has exhibited a rotundity out of all proportion with the rest of the body, and which would have extorted the envy of the flower of London Jeameses."

The term *Red* Karen was attributed by Dr. Richardson to the colour of the race in comparison with other neighbouring tribes, but not with sufficient reason, as the latter are, as a rule, fairer than the *Kayas*, who are of a medium copper colour, which, as remarked by Mr. O'Riley, is preserved in the Kayas

* Dr. Richardson, in his journal, while describing the Red Karens as recorded in the text, admitted that they showed more agility in running races than his own people, whom they challenged on every occasion.

from the circumstance of their rarely, if ever, taking wives from other tribes.

The appellation of *Karennee* or Red Karen was evidently given them by the Burmese on account of the colour of their breeches and turbans.

On the authority of Dr. Mason we learn that in talking of themselves they use the word *Kaya*, or *Pŕā-kă-ya*, which simply means man, they are called *Bghai-muhta* or *Eastern Bghai* by the other *Bghai* (Bwé) tribes, while *Yang-lang* or Red Karen is their name among the Shans.

To the people of *Keangtung* in the northern Shan states, again, according to McLeod, they were known as *Niang*, to the Chinese as *Yang-tsa.**

Religion.—In a chapter devoted to a brief consideration of the religion of the Karens, we noticed that they are distinguished from all other Indo-Chinese tribes apparently by the knowledge they have of the existence of an eternal God, while they are, at the same time, the victims of a degrading superstition, which teaches them to deprecate the wrath of malignant demons by sacrifice of cattle, swine, fowls, and dogs.

Dr. Richardson, writing in 1837, and Mr. O'Riley twenty years afterwards, exclude the Red Karens from participating in that extended belief which admits of the existence of an Almighty Power, the Creator of heaven and earth presiding over the world, and recognized head of all subordinate spiritual agency. But from subsequent accounts recorded by Dr. Mason, we find that the Red Karens have traditions of Biblical facts similar to those noticed in ano-

* See Captain (now Major-General) McLeod's "Journal."

ther chapter, as pertaining to the *Sgan* Karens, "but they have a different name for God, whom they designate *Eapay*."

"*Eapay*," they say, "created the heavens and the earth, and all things. He associated with men at first, but, for their disobedience, he left them, and is now in the seventh heavens.

"When sick, they often pray to God, saying, 'Oh, Lord *Eapay*, have mercy upon me.'"*

Many of the Red Karen chiefs have sent cordial invitations to Christian missionaries, entreating them to reside among them, and teach them a better way.

Dr. Mason was held by Zephogyee, the late chief of Karennee, and by his sons in affectionate reverence. Messrs. Vinton and Bunker were also hospitably welcomed when they visited Karennee, and encouraged to persevere in their good work of reclaiming the heathen.

Let us hope that this feeling betokens the dawn of a better state of things, and that their present impure faith may give way to a nobler one, which shall emancipate them from chains of darkness, raise them in the social scale, and allow them to take their place among the enlightened of the earth.

Social Customs. Births.—The Red Karen ceremonies at the birth of a child differ considerably from those performed by other tribes.

When the infant is three or four days old the parents inaugurate a feast in its honour, and all who choose to come thereto are welcome. After the guests have assembled "the mother takes the child

* Mason's "Burmah," p. 73.

in a wrapper, on her back, and goes down out of the house. She is then supposed, by a legal figment, to proceed to the paddy field, but, in fact, she goes out a few yards, digs the ground a little with a hoe or spade, pulls up a few weeds, and returns to the house. These are symbolical acts, by which the mother pledges herself to labour for the support of the child.*

"When the feast is over, the relations give presents to the child."

From another source we learn that the mother also puts the tiny hand of the child on the hoe handle, pledging herself, as it were, that the child will not grow up lazy or idle.

Betrothals.—The Red Karens, it would appear, never betroth their children during infancy, but leave the young people to make their own engagements; in this they differ from many of the other tribes, among whom it is a common practice to betroth their children while young, going on the principle, says Dr. Mason, "that marriages are made in heaven, and believing that parties who marry do so in accordance with an engagement into which their spirits entered in the presence of God before they were born."

Marriages.—Their marriage ceremonies also differ materially from those observed by other Karens, as noticed by Dr. Mason and Mr. Bunker, from whom we learn that when the augury of the fowls' bones decide on the auspicious time, a great feast is made at the bridegroom's house, at which excessive licence as regards eating and drinking appear to be the rule.

* Dr. Mason in "J. A. S. B."

"In the midst of the feasting, and in the presence of the whole company, the bridegroom offers a cup of spirits to his bride, who drinks it up; and then he asks her 'is it agreeable?' to which she replies 'very agreeable.' The next day the bride returns home and makes a similar feast, to which the bridegroom and his friends go. It is now her turn to offer the cup to him, and when he replies to her question 'is it agreeable?' that 'it is very agreeable,' the two are regarded as married."*

From Mr. Bunker we learn that, during the carouse, the bridegroom gets up, takes a hoe and leaves the house followed by the bride. He digs the earth with his hoe for a little, and the bride standing behind him follows his example, thereby acknowledging that she must work equally with her husband, and be subject to his orders. After this the bride, attended by the company, takes a small bamboo bucket to the spring, and draws therefrom half a bucket full of water, the bridegroom filling the bucket; the bride then returns to the house behind the bridegroom, bearing the bucket of water. This last act signifies that she will be subservient to her husband.

Deaths.—The Red Karens are distinguished from Sgans and Pwos proper, by burying their dead. Like all the Bwé tribes their coffins are made from a single log, with an aperture sufficiently large to permit of the corpse being squeezed into a more roomy space below. The body lies in state for three or four days, during which time music and dancing is kept up, diversified by weeping and wailing. After

* Dr. Mason, "J. A. S. B."

this, in the case of ordinary persons, the corpse is taken to its last resting-place, accompanied by all the relatives and friends of the deceased, gongs and other instruments sounding the funeral dirge, and is buried in a grave some six or seven feet deep, over which a miniature house is erected to indicate the spot.

When a chief dies, however, he is buried with a greater amount of secrecy,* for the grave is dug at night time to the depth of twenty feet or more, the corpse placed therein and the grave well filled up with stones, care being taken that the burial place shall not be distinguished,† for there is an ancient tradition among the Red Karens, that if the Shans or Burmese succeed in procuring the head of a deceased chief, they will be able to conquer the Karennee nation and reduce it to slavery.

Apart from the natural sorrow that is felt at the

* So we find on the authority of *Hwiu Seng* and *Sung Yun*, who visited Central Asia in 518 A.D., that although it was customary in Khoten (Cotan) to honour the ashes of the common dead by building towers over them, "when a king died, they did not burn his body, but enclose it in a coffin and carry it far off, and bury it in the desert."—Beal's "Trav. Bud. Pilgrims," p. 179.

Roman history tells us that on the death of Alaric the Goth, his followers "turned the stream of the Bisenzio, caused their slaves to dig a grave in the bed of the river, and after burying him there with all his treasures, they turned back the waters into their course, and slew all the slaves that had been employed in the work."—"Landmarks of Ancient History," p. 209.

† Mr. Bunker, to whom we are indebted for interesting notes on this subject, heard that when the late chief Kephogyee died, his people had great difficulty in finding a suitable place to bury his corpse, on account of the rocky nature of the soil.

demise of those near and dear to them, death is regarded by the people as a very great calamity, on account of the excessive expense attending on the celebration of the funeral obsequies in what they consider a proper manner, for custom requires that the friends of the deceased shall thoroughly equip him for the next world, and as they believe that the future status of the deceased, as regards material possessions, depends upon what he takes with him from this world, it resolves itself into a point of honour with the surviving relations to furnish him with a liberal outfit, that he may have every comfort and be a person of consideration in his new home; consequently, when the coffin is lowered into the grave, several baskets of rice with earthen pots for cooking it, clothes, guns, swords, knives, axes, hoes, &c., for the use of the deceased, are thrown in with it. The grave is filled in without any further ceremony, and a small hut is (as before noticed) built over it, and within or on it are placed rice and other food, as well as utensils for the use of the deceased.*

Mr. O'Riley also learnt that on the interment of any influential person, a slave and a pony were secured near the grave, but not sacrificed, and although bound with the purpose of preventing escape, they invariably released themselves from their bonds, the slave in such case regaining freedom from all previous claims.

The ceremonies connected with the interment of the dead go far to corroborate the traditions of the Kayas and other Karens, in regard to their having come from the north, for they are identical with

* Vide illustration.

what Marco Polo observed in the province of Tangut, south of the Great Desert. He says, "When they are going to carry a body to the burning,* the kinsfolk build a wooden house on the way to the spot, and drape it with clothes of silk and gold. When the body is going past the building, they call a halt, and set before it wine and meat and other eatables, and this they do with the assurance that the defunct will be received with the like attentions in the world to come. All the minstrelsy in the town goes playing before the body, and when it reaches the burning place, the kinsfolk are prepared with figures cut out of parchment and paper, in the shape of men, and horses, and camels, and also with round pieces of paper like gold coins, and all these they burn along with the corpse, for they say that in the other world, the defunct will be provided with slaves, and cattle, and money, just in proportion to the amount of such pieces of paper that has been burnt along with him."†

There can be little doubt (as Colonel Yule says in a note to Marco Polo's text) that these customs are symbols of the ancient sacrifices of human beings and valuable property on such occasions.

Mr. O'Riley, in allusion to the customs now under notice, remarked, "It may be presumed that a ceremony shrouded by a darkened and dread superstition has passed through many generations without any material alteration from the process of its normal institution; if so, it affords an unerring data from which we may trace the origin of these

* Some of the Karens burn their dead.

† Yule's "Marco Polo," pp. 184, 185, vol. i.

mountain races to the ancient Mongols, whose Tartar tribes, as far back as history carries us, used similar forms of sepulture, accompanied, however, by the sacrifice of life at the tomb.

Slavery.—Any account of the Red Karens would be incomplete without some reference to the subject of slavery, which may be considered a normal institution among them; for independent as Karennee is from the natural advantage of its position, a large portion of its inhabitants are slaves.

Slaves are of two kinds—1st. Those who, without assets, or the protection of an insolvent court, voluntarily submit to the condition of slavery in liquidation of their debts.* 2ndly. Those who have been kidnapped or made prisoners.

The state of debtor slavery, as remarked by Mr. O'Riley, "has become an integral portion of their social system;"† the other and more iniquitous system which has its existence in the kidnapping propensities of the people, engendered partly by the existence of a system of retaliation and intertribal blood feuds, and partly through love of adventure, will probably exist till (as was the case with other tribes in British territory) their savage condition has been ameliorated by the adoption of Christianity, or an organised system of government.

Slavery, however, as it exists among them, is of the mildest form, the social condition of the slaves

* The system of self-pawning, another of the ancient Asiatic customs, has a similar development among most of the Himalaic and West Indonesian tribes.—Logan, "Journ. Ind. Arch.," vol. ii, No. 4, 1857.

† O'Riley's notice of Karennee, ibid.

being little inferior to that of their masters. Still it is deplorable, for ruthless savages as the captives may be, they are noticeable for their domestic affection, and it must be a sore pang for the poor people to be torn from their homes, separated as members of a family, "driven like cattle across the Salwen and sold by the Yoons, to be by them resold to the Siamese, and eventually end their career the slaves of a nation of slaves; no worse or more pitiable condition than which can possibly be imagined."*

In the Red Karens we have a people, who, though they have long lost their nomadic habits, and for many generations past, have been settled residents in a country whose population has been estimated at twenty-eight souls per square mile, have, as yet, no organised form of government.

Information under the head of "Statistics of Protection," one of the leading features of annual reports of our administration, would therefore be rather vague and negative.

"They have," however, "no police, no prisons, no penitentiaries, no schools for the reformation of young thieves, and yet they have no locks on their doors, no watch dogs in their yards, no man-traps or spring-guns in their gardens, and still thefts are very uncommon."†

In our historical sketch we have noted that Karennee comprises five districts or principalities, ruled by separate chiefs, but that for the sake of convenience it might simply be divided into Eastern and Western Karennee. These chiefs, by a com-

* O'Riley's notice of Karennee.

† "Burmah," p. 91.

bination of circumstances, have acquired the position of rulers over the portions of country allotted to them, but for all practical purposes have little or no authority over their nominal subjects, unless under exceptional conditions, for each village has its chief, who, with the assistance of elders, carries on the "local administration," and is generally independent of higher authority.

Karennee and its people might have a brilliant future before them if the civilising influences that have done so much for peoples equally barbarous, could be brought to bear upon them; but as this is out of the question in its entirety, it seems reasonable to hope, in the interests of humanity, that this desirable object may be furthered by every legitimate means.

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